



THE CHANGING EAST



KEMAL PASHA.

THE CHANGING EAST

BY
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WITH A FRONTISPIECE



CASSELL AND COMPANY, LTD
LONDON, TORONTO, MELBOURNE AND SYDNEY

First Published 1926

11089

Printed in Great Britain

CONTENTS

CHAP.	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	7

PART ONE

THE NEW TURKEY

I CONSTANTINOPLE OF TO-DAY	27
II ANGORA	44

PART TWO

EGYPT

III FROM TURKEY TO EGYPT	65
IV POLITICS IN EGYPT	79
V TUTANKHAMEN AND TOURISTS	92

PART THREE

INDIA

VI INDIA REVISITED	101
VII DARJEELING—AN INTERLUDE	110
VIII POLITICS IN INDIA	117
IX THE CENTRAL LEGISLATURE	131
X PROBLEMS IN THE BACKGROUND	142

CHAP.		PAGE
XI	THE PETER PAN THEORY OF INDIA . . .	151
XII	VILLAGE LIFE IN INDIA	158
XIII	THE PUNJAB	172
XIV	HINDUISM IN PRACTICE	178
XV	A VISIT TO RABINDRANATH TAGORE . . .	195
XVI	A VISIT TO GANDHI	208
XVII	A VISIT TO THE JAM SAHIB	216
XVIII	SCRAPS FROM AN INDIAN NOTE-BOOK . . .	227
XIX	SOME GENERAL CONCLUSIONS	237
	INDEX	253

THE CHANGING EAST

INTRODUCTION

I

THIS book is the result of a journey to Turkey, Egypt and India undertaken for the *Westminster Gazette* during the winter and spring of 1925-6. Parts of it have already appeared in the form of articles contributed to that newspaper, but many new chapters have been added and the original material has been revised and rearranged. Turkey was new to me, and my special object in going there was to study the situation created between us and the Turks by the Mosul dispute, and to be at Angora at the time when the decision of the League of Nations was promulgated. That fortunately proved possible, thanks to the kindness of Turkish friends who arranged it for me. Egypt was moderately familiar to me, for I had spent four months there as a member of the Milner Mission in 1919-20; and India not entirely new, for I had been present at the Great Durbar in 1911 and spent several months before and after it in travelling about the country.

I am not seeking to add to the multitudinous books of travel on these regions and still less to present an exhaustive account of the conditions in any of them. My object was to study the states of opinion and politics in them, and to discover, if I could, how it fared with

British policy or British rule, as the case might be. Turkey, Egypt and India, though otherwise very dissimilar, have one feature in common, which in a sense makes them the object of one study. They are all countries which for long periods have been either inextricably mixed up with Europe or subject to European control, and they are all attempting in one way or another to free themselves from that control. They pursue this object in different ways according to their several necessities and circumstances, but it is substantially the same object, and it presents the European Powers—especially ourselves—with a problem of great delicacy and intricacy.

In Turkey the Ottoman Empire destroyed in the Great War has given place to a Turkish state which is deliberately turning its back on the traditional policy pursued by the "Sublime Porte," that is the Sultans, Grand Viziers and officials operating from Constantinople. Turkey henceforth is to be Turanian, not Ottoman, and the outward sign and symbol of this is that she transfers her capital from Constantinople, which is supposed to be incurably Ottomanized and internationalized, to Angora, which is in the heart of the Homelands of the true Turkey. Kemal Pasha, who in a very real sense may be called the saviour of his country—for it is due to him that any Turkey at all survived after the Great War—has shown much skill and wisdom in making virtues of his necessities. According to the theory which he set up, the crushing blows suffered by the Ottoman Empire were blessings in disguise to the true Turkey, which had suffered even more than its other dominions from the tyranny and misgovernment of former times. By seizing the happy opportunity now offered it, the Turkish nation would—it was claimed—for the first time be able to consolidate its true elements, throw off its foreign entangle-

ments, and present itself to the world as a unified independent nation with inviolable frontiers. This involved among other consequences the abandonment of the Caliphate (as a Turkish institution) and all the indirect claims going with it to influence the policy of other Asiatic states. Turkey was thus deliberately, and by her own act, to be reduced to what was Turkish, but on that ground she would stand stubborn and immovable.

There is much in this theory that commands sympathy, but in practice it encounters great difficulties. Together with the desire to be all-Turkish, goes also the desire to be completely modern ; and the two things are hard to reconcile. While Turkish deputies and officials are kept toiling under an iron discipline at Angora, the old pashas cling to their pleasanter life at Constantinople, and young men and, still more, young women, are giving themselves all the airs of the emancipated West in that internationalized or denationalized city. Cinemas and theatres are crowded, jazz bands fill the air, and unveiled ladies with short skirts dance with Parisianized young Turks into the small hours of the morning. Angora issues its decrees against these un-Turkish enormities, but the old capital sets up a passive resistance and goes its own way. The strict logic of the "Turkish Homeland" theory would seem to lead to the abandonment of Constantinople, but this would lower pride beyond what is tolerable and quite possibly raise a new storm from within and without in which even the new Turkey would founder.

The result is that Kemal Pasha and his Government waver between two objects ; the practical necessity which compels them to keep Constantinople, and the desire to reduce it to a subordinate place. This leads in practice to a harassing policy both against the Turks

frontiers of the New Turkey, now that it had stripped itself or been stripped of all extraneous possessions and ambitions and was concentrating upon the peaceful development of its "Homelands." Quotations were shown me from Italian papers suggesting that Signor Mussolini had designs on Smyrna, and from Greek hinting that a day would come when Greece would be avenged and the way opened for her to Constantinople; and I was asked of what use would the sacrifice and self-restraint of the New Turkey be, if her "irreducible minimum" was still to be exposed to the ambition and envy of the European Powers. It would be an immense aid to peace and good relations, if a reassuring answer could be given to these questions; and I hope at all events it will be a steady part of British policy to prevent encroachments on the Turkish nation, as now constituted, provided it shows itself capable of humane and orderly Government.

2

About Egypt, which presents another phase of the same problem, I have little to add to what is in the text. The entanglements of Egypt with Europe are unescapable, but I see no reason why she should not have the national status that she claims and with it the fullest and freest opportunity of self-government. But she can only get these things through an amicable agreement with Great Britain, which must continue to defend her from outside interference and at the same time be in a position to assure other Powers that solvency and law and order are not imperilled. In return Egypt must be willing to recognize the essential interests which require Great Britain to keep a certain force on Egyptian territory and would still require it, if the Egyptian nation were

non-existent. She must also realize that it is useless and irritating for her to keep on beating against our position in the Sudan. These problems have only to be stated to show that they call for careful and skilful handling on both sides. But they are just such problems as Englishmen trained in British constitutional ideas should have the requisite touch for handling, and if they are so handled, I believe that we shall still have all the influence that British interests need or the welfare of Egypt requires without encroaching upon either the theory or the practice of Egyptian independence. Egypt, as we have learnt in recent years, is liable to sudden ebullitions of violence, and some of her politicians have become entangled in formulas and pledges given hastily in moments of excitement to extreme partisans, but some-part of the difficulty is due to our own mishandling at critical moments, and I do not believe that there is any radical ill-feeling on either side. Turkey conceivably might clear herself of her European entanglements at a given sacrifice, but Egypt could not without total disaster ; and I hope we may so act as to bring her to the conclusion that she could not obtain the European partnership which she must have on easier terms than she will get it from Great Britain.

The point to bear in mind when we reach what is called a crisis in Egypt, is that we are on the solid ground of being firmly in possession of the things which we deem essential to our own and other European interests in Egypt. It is not a question of our extorting concessions from Egypt ; it is merely a question of whether the Egyptians can force us to make concessions which we deem unwise or unfair. We are in the Sudan ; we control foreign policy ; the British force which we think necessary is in Egypt, and the officials whom we think

necessary are there also. It would undoubtedly be more satisfactory to us, and I should have thought also to the Egyptians, if these essentials could be acknowledged by them and embodied in a treaty which put their independence, as well as our stipulations, on more solid ground than that of a mere Proclamation. I greatly hope that this may even now be accomplished; but if after seven years of fruitless discussion this proves to be impossible, the best course for both of us is to end the debate in the only way it can be ended, i.e. by a simple intimation that we are not prepared to reopen it.

There was much talk in the newspapers after the recent elections of our demanding "guarantees" from the incoming Prime Minister. The word is out of place in this discussion, for we need no guarantees but our own position, and none can be better or so good. To stand over an Egyptian Minister and demand that he sign some formula renouncing Egyptian claims would be the same sort of futility as we committed in the months before the South African War, when we stood over President Kruger and tried in vain to make him say that we were his "Suzerain." As things are, any unnecessary forcing of these issues can only have the result of encouraging extremists and making it difficult for moderates to take or retain office. The present High Commissioner, I am sure, needs no instruction on this part of his duties; but if British policy needs further definition, our proper course is, it seems to me, to intimate that the controversy on the reserved questions must be considered closed except for the one purpose of negotiating a friendly treaty. The main point, meanwhile, is to make clear by our acts that we have no intention of encroaching upon the legitimate sphere of

Egyptian self-government. If we can do that the rest will follow.

In writing about Egypt I have devoted a few pages to my experiences as a member of the Milner Mission, 1919-20. The circumstances of that Mission and the steps by which it reached its conclusions have been little understood, and they have still an important bearing upon the present situation. I do not think I have said anything from which my colleagues would dissent, but I am of course alone responsible for what is written in this book.

3

India with its vast population, immense size and varying conditions presents a far more perplexing administrative problem than either Egypt or Turkey, and presents it to us as the responsible rulers. Looking at India and comparing it with Europe, one's feeling is not of surprise that there should be unrest, but that there should be so much tranquillity over so vast an area. To travel over a great continent, to pass from state to state, through a maze of nationalities, with all their differences of race, language and religion, and to find their separate Governments all at peace under one overruling Government is an extraordinary refreshment to a European coming straight from the smouldering battlefield of his own continent. *Tua si bona noris* is the tag which is oftenest in his mind when he comes to talk to Indian politicians. India in this respect seems so much the most civilized part of the world that he has seen, and the boon is so immeasurable that he wonders to find it so little realized.

But it *is* little realized, and perhaps could only be realized from the hard experience which has made it a

far-off dream to the present generation of Europeans. The Indian politician takes it for granted, as if it were a happy achievement of nature or Providence, and we do little or nothing to enlighten him about the effort which has brought it about or the mechanism which is needed to keep it in being. He too, being unconscious of what the European has done for him, speaks lightly of throwing off the European partner, and apparently he thinks it a simple thing to govern a continent and keep its peace.

This is one of the results of manufacturing constitutions for India at Westminster and handing them ready-made to Indians to digest and work. We omit the whole process of controversy and debate by which in our own country men and women are instructed in the fundamentals or educated up to a change in the constitution, and then we are surprised that Indians do not, cannot, or will not, play the parts assigned to them. I found it taken for granted, when I was in India, that three years from now, a commission which, it was hoped, would consist of peers and M.P.s—will go out to India, examine the situation and report to the Government, which will then frame a measure, if any is thought necessary, and hand it to India to carry into operation. I feel convinced that this procedure will not meet the case, or any which omits to take the Indians into consultation about the amendment of the constitution and to make them in some measure responsible for its form. The whole method which keeps the date 1929 hanging over India and makes it a fore-ordained year of crisis and agitation is bad, and the proper way out of it is to get Indians themselves to work on the problems which must be solved before there can be any considerable further advance towards responsible government. The

inquiry needed is first of all in India itself, and Indians, I think, should be invited to take part in it without any limitation on their freedom or independence. Let their leaders be asked to formulate their own proposals and then to consider in the light of experience and criticism how they would work.

Such an inquiry would lead at once to the heart of the problem and I think it would bring out, in a way that nothing else will, that the securities which the British Government seeks are not perverse impediments set in the path of patriotic Indians, but the necessary guarantees of unity and order which Indians would have to find for themselves, if we were removed. The problem is the government not of a nation but of a continent, and the nearest parallel to it is to be found in the Constitution of the United States, which bristles with provisions that Indian politicians would think arbitrary and tyrannical. We have unfortunately ourselves taught the Indian to think in terms of the British House of Commons, and he is apt to imagine that responsible government as practised at Westminster is the key to all his problems, provincial and central. Yet nothing is more certain than that responsible government thus impartially distributed would make confusion in India and produce conflicts that would be most dangerous to her unity. The next step, it seems to me, is nothing less than the working out of a Federal Constitution for India, and until the main lines of that are laid down, I do not see how the provincial problem is to be solved. We may be able to proceed from dyarchy to full collective responsibility in the Provinces, if the necessary powers are conceded to the Central Government to prevent disaster, if it fails, and we may be able to do almost nothing if they are not conceded. I have used the conventional "we"

in writing this sentence, but if the word "Indians" is substituted, it will stand exactly as written. The problem is not imposed on India by an autocratic Government; it is inherent in her own circumstances, her vast expanse, her many and varied nationalities, her racial and religious differences.

I find myself speaking more dogmatically about Indian affairs than I should have ventured to do when I visited the country fourteen years ago. Then the traveller found himself in the presence of mysteries which, it was universally agreed, could only be fathomed by experts. He approached the Raj as he did one of those sacred shrines where he was permitted to put one foot across the threshold if his European boot was carefully draped, but was instantly pulled back if he sought to advance. Now after fourteen years he returns to India to find it plunged into his own business of politics and he feels no shame in offering his comments on the familiar thing.

India, to my eye, presents some extraordinary features which I cannot believe will last. Her administrators are expected to be officials, Cabinet Ministers and parliamentary spokesmen rolled into one, and though they manfully try to combine these parts, the qualities which make for success in all of them cannot often be found together in the same individuals. At the best there is an almost inevitable conflict between the official and the political part of their duties, and they cannot and are not expected to take up what is ordinarily a chief part of a politician's task, viz., the defence of his cause against opponents in the country. When political controversy is hot or deadlock is reached, the Government over-rides the Opposition and retires into the administrative bush, leaving its opponents to

attack it unanswered in the constituencies, where the field is left clear to the various anti-Government parties. Thus at election times all the officials and official nominees holding the nominated seats in the Assembly and Councils are brigaded in one camp, and all the candidates and electors in the other. An Indian who is a whole-hearted supporter of the Government—and there are many such—has simply no opportunity of recording a vote in its favour, and is reduced to choosing among Opposition candidates of various colours the one whom he thinks the least mischievous or the least effective. The Government of India may be strong enough—and at the moment it is very strong—to sit above the battle in this way, but the political education which comes of hearing both sides is impossible in these conditions, and the idea that all elected persons must be against the Government inevitably becomes the basis of controversial politics. Indeed, even on the Councils, the elected member who accepts office as a Minister runs a heavy risk of losing the support of his party, simply on the ground that he has gone into the Government camp.

Some of these anomalies belong to the Swarajist phase of politics and can only be cured by a change of opinion, but others may be stamped into the country and become a permanent tradition, if the whole business of propaganda politics and electioneering is to be considered outside the official sphere. I am not prepared with ready-made specifics to cure this state of things, but I suggest it as a subject of study before the next reforms. In this connexion it would be well if as many trained politicians as possible could visit India and look for themselves at what is going on. There is nowhere in the world a more interesting political experiment, and

since India is committed to it, it is extremely desirable that the best political minds should be brought to bear on it.

Nevertheless, the British politician who goes to India will have to shed a good many preconceptions. India is in many ways more like a different planet than a different continent, and whoever strays from the beaten track finds himself immediately among a multitude of people whose ways of life and habits of mind seem unfathomably deep and perplexing. The Hindu has a lure which hardly any other Eastern man has for the Western. It is impossible to think of him as uncivilized : he has ideas about eternity and existence which make Western theology seem crude and fumbling ; he is often very gifted and very lovable. I have tried in certain chapters in this book to suggest what he is like and how he lives, but one can hardly write any sentence about him without wishing it written differently. Yet imperfectly as one may grasp it, this man's life and that of the Moslem who has somehow to live with him and on terms with him, are and must remain the chief part of the problem with which the politicians have to deal. After looking at it only a little, I get a conviction that no constitution for India can be successful which does not, within its framework, give these people a large opportunity of fashioning their life and institutions in their own way, and to that end of obtaining representatives more closely in touch with them than the present politicians can be.

Gandhi, in an interview which I have recorded in this book, said that we had destroyed the Eastern life of the Indian village, without bringing the Western prosperity which might have been a compensation. I do not think this is true, for if we may believe eighteenth

and early nineteenth century travellers, the old self-dependent life of which Gandhi is thinking had already been irretrievably spoilt by the incursions of traders before we came on the scene. It is nevertheless impossible for an Englishman to look at the poverty of a great part of India and be easy in his mind that all has been done that might have been in the last hundred years. There could have been no more admirable guardians for the simple inhabitants of what was supposed to be the unchanging East than the public school and university-trained officials who ruled India for a large part of the nineteenth century ; but when the East began to change, and its inhabitants to multiply, and to develop new wants, the situation called for men of business, engineers, men of science, and expert agriculturists in far greater measure than we supplied them. Gandhi's reproach is to that extent true. India undoubtedly strikes a man coming from Europe as underdeveloped, and it is only by development with the aid of Western science that she can hope to cure the poverty of a population which has enormously increased under Western rule. It is to be hoped that the Agricultural Commission just appointed will break new ground in this vital matter, for there is no other way. The population of India is far too great and too deeply committed to modern ways of supplying its wants to be able to find safety in the retreat to mediævalism that Gandhi recommends.

4

For all these reasons a " loose from Europe " policy is impracticable for India, which means that her association with us must continue, and not only continue but be converted into a closer partnership. This cuts across

the old theory that "East is East and West is West and never the twain shall meet," for meet they must, if either we or India are to find satisfaction and profit in our partnership, or even, in the one ruling and the other being ruled. I met a Frenchman in India who predicted positively that we should break down under this test. He said that we were altogether admirable in dealing with savage, primitive and childlike peoples, but that our colour-prejudices and inflexible temperament would make eternal friction with the educated and literate classes which were growing up all over Asia and especially in India. I do not believe it. Returning to India after fourteen years I was most of all struck by the breaking down of the barriers between British and Indian, "cantonment" and "city," which had seemed to be irremovable when I was there before. Men of both races were working intimately with each other in science, art, business, education, philanthropy and a large number of the administrative services. Even politicians who were ardent Nationalists and in public "non-co-operators" told me that some of their best friends were English. If for that reason alone, India struck me as a much more cheerful, friendly and hopeful place than fourteen years ago, and I cannot imagine any young man who is thinking of an Indian career being deterred by the talk which represents the new conditions as worse than the old. The Indian problem is one of fascinating interest, and if it requires some accommodation from these who would solve it, it gives scope, as never before, to men of original, resourceful and sympathetic minds. In what I have written I have tried not to shirk the difficulties, but they are just the kind of difficulties which should be a challenge to adventurous young men.

Whatever may be their defects, the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms have largely contributed to this change, and if for that reason alone they would be abundantly justified. But I look forward not only to political partnership but to increasing co-operation on the neutral ground which lies outside politics and administration. The politicians are not the only Indians to be considered, prominent as they may be on the best-advertised stage. There is no Eastern country which has so many talented men in so many walks of life. Men like Tagore, whose writings are read all through Europe and America ; Sir J. C. Bose, whose researches into plant physiology are famous the world over and whose zeal and originality as a teacher make an indescribable impression on those who see him at work with his students ; Badahur Rao the historian of India ; Dhan Gopal Mukerji, the author of *My Brother's Face* ; Gangulee, the scientific agriculturist ; Cornelia Sorabji, the writer and lawyer,—to name only a few out of scores—would be highly distinguished in any European country, and most of them have followers and students round them who would do credit to any Western seat of learning. All these should be led to feel that they are respected and appreciated and that they are working on a plane of absolute equality with ourselves for the same human purposes. One sees the massed battalions of winter-tourists descending on India and darting through the country with scarcely a side-glance at its people and institutions. It would be wholly to the good if a much larger number of the serious English would make it an object to go there at least once in their lives, and endeavour to enter into the lives and thoughts of the Indian people. India is a wonderful and fascinating country, and more and more, as one looks at it, one is encouraged to believe that if English and Indian

work together, it will be not merely a "dependency" of our Empire, but the centre of a subtle and original civilization which will be of value to the whole world.

The politics of India are always changing: one phase may be dominated by the demand for Home Rule, another by the quarrel between Hindu and Mohamedan. But certain radical problems remain through all these phases, and peace and progress depend ultimately on their solution. . In what follows I have tried to indicate what these problems are, while describing one phase as I saw it in the early months of 1926.

PART ONE

THE NEW TURKEY

CHAPTER I

CONSTANTINOPLE OF TO-DAY

A Queer Cargo—The Prohibition of the Fez—What it Means—Modernizing the Turk—Dropping the Caliphate—Kemal Pasha and Islam—A Godless City and its Mosques—Emancipated Turkey—The Importance of Constantinople—The Transfer of the Capital—The Attitude to the Foreigner—Comparison with Egypt—Conflicting Aims and Ideals—A Dangerous Policy—The Right Solution.

I

WHEN the ship on which I came to Constantinople reached Brindisi, she was awaited on the quayside by two lorries filled with small crates packed with men's hats. There were so many of them that when he had taken a certain number of them on board, our captain waved his hands impatiently and said he would take no more.

The hats had been coming by every ship and every train for months past, and the cry was always for more. For Kemal Pasha had decreed that no Turk in future should wear a fez, and those who disobeyed were liable to severe penalties. On the day I landed, I read in a Turkish newspaper that fifteen recalcitrants had been arrested on the previous day, and were awaiting trial for this offence. Leaders of an agitation against hats had even been sentenced to death. There is not a fez in Constantinople to-day, but all other head-dresses

apparently are lawful, and hats that have not been seen in Europe for ten years are resurrected in Stamboul and worn by Turkish fruit-sellers and porters.

The only comment I heard on this decree was that Kemal Pasha might have allowed a little more time than the few days which were all the notice given. Whatever he may be thinking, the old Turk in Constantinople has learnt not to question the ways of the Providence which is enthroned at Angora; and from the Turks with whom I talked during the next three weeks, I heard no word in reflection on the greatness and wisdom of Kemal in this or in any other matter.

He at that moment was everything and everybody. His courage, his firmness, his insight were compared daily with the weakness and vacillation of the old regime. These eulogies might have been deserved, but what exactly Kemal meant and what he was aiming at were questions which I found every minute more puzzling.

For instance, this business of the hats. The leading quality of the Kemalist movement is an ardent Turkish Nationalism. Nobody doubts that or questions its sincerity. But why should an ardent Nationalist seek to abolish an immemorial feature of the national costume? Why at a stroke make the streets of Constantinople look like those of any southern European city, and remove an outward and visible mark which distinguished the Turk from the motley Levantine population which crowds Constantinople? One would have expected Kemal to say not that the Turks should wear hats, but that no one except a Turk should wear a fez. The result of doing the reverse is outwardly to de-Turkify Constantinople. Théophile Gautier or any old-time Turcophil would wring his hands if he could walk in

Stamboul to-day and see the women unveiled and the street-sellers in bowlers or cloth caps.

And yet it was just the fact that the Western eye considered the fez picturesque and amusing which stung the pride of the Turk. He is determined to be taken seriously ; he is determined that he will not sit as a model to the Théophile Gautiers and Pierre Lotis, or act the amusing child to a European audience. Here begins a new chapter in the philosophy of clothes. The Turk, henceforth, according to the creed of Kemal, is to be Turk first and last, but he is also to be modern of the moderns, holding his head high with the pride of the bowlered and topped, and he will have none of our condescension to the picturesque Asiatic.¹

The fez then must go that he may be modern, and with the fez and for the same reason has gone the Caliphate—i.e. the Moslem papacy vested in the former Sultans of Turkey—which made them in theory the spiritual directors of all the faithful, in whatever country they might be. Here practical as well as sentimental reasons come in. If Turkey wishes to be left alone, she must not be mixed up with the religious quarrels of Arabs, Indians, Moors and Egyptians ; if she wishes to

¹ After I had given this explanation of the abolition of the fez in an address to the Rotary Club at Calcutta, an Indian Mohamedan who spoke later said it was far too charitable. In his opinion there was not the slightest doubt that Kemal deliberately intended to insult the Mohamedan religion. It was incumbent on a Mohamedan both to keep his head covered and to touch the ground with his forehead in saying his prayers. This he could not do in a European hat or attempt to do it without making himself ridiculous. The fez and turban were suitable head-dresses for Mohamedans and there were no others, as Kemal was perfectly well aware. This construction seems to me far-fetched, but it is widespread in the East.

be thought modern and enlightened, she must cast off the mediæval and outworn pretensions of the Moslem Papacy. The decision seems to me sound, and it is to Kemal's credit that in coming to it he has not dallied with the supposed political value of the Caliphate or its possible uses in making trouble for the Powers which have Moslem subjects.

The Kemalist protests that religion is not persecuted in Turkey to-day, and this in a formal sense is true. But secularization is one of Kemal's watchwords, and it sets the fashion for all but fervent believers. In Turkey the Nationalist movement runs an exactly contrary course to that of the corresponding movements in India, which are seeking a new spiritual nourishment in the old faiths. The Turkish Nationalist sees in Islam none of the revivifying elements which the Indian discovers in Hinduism. He is not a mystic, and the Koran does not stir his imagination or his sense of poetry. Since it is written in Arabic, he is generally unable to read it, or to understand the prayers—also in that language—that are offered in the mosques, and he is easily persuaded that the discarding of these ancient and unintelligible shibboleths is a necessity for a civilized people.¹

Despite the Caliphate, other Moslems have long said beneath their breath that Constantinople is a godless city. When the Indian troops were there they judged that the Turks were "bad Moslems," and made loud

¹ Since this was written, the Turkish Government has announced its intention of entering into diplomatic relations with the Hedjaz by appointing an extraordinary diplomatic agent and accepting a Hedjaz agent. It also sent a delegate to the Congress of Mecca. These are intimations that it desires to keep touch with Islam, while it declines the Caliphate.

comments on the neglect of the mosques. I went into two or three of these at the hour of prayer on a Friday, and saw only a sprinkling of the devout at a moment when the India mosques would be crowded to overflowing ; and the state of dilapidation into which some of these glorious fabrics are falling is altogether deplorable. One trembles for Santa Sophia, whose dome is said to be in much the same condition as that of St. Paul's, but without a public to care for it or competent engineers and architects to take the work in hand, if it were thought worth while. My guide took me from Santa Sophia to the great Blue Mosque just opposite (a seventeenth-century building) and bade me observe its unfaded splendour and unimpeachable stability. These, he said, were proof of what Turkish architects could do for themselves without "Besantine" assistance. That the "Besantine" building had been standing about a thousand years longer than the Turkish, or that the Turks had any responsibility to keep the "Besantine" in repair, were apparently novel ideas to him ; and if it fell to-morrow, I verily believe he would draw the moral that the superiority of Turkish building had been established beyond dispute.

Some of Kemal's religious reforms are undoubtedly salutary. He has suppressed the dervishes, removed education from the mosques, made a clean sweep of the idlers and beggars who infested them, and ruthlessly cut down the number of the Imams. But he has done these things with a zest which is a little more than that of a disinterested religious reformer. His tolerance, if it can be so called, is tinged with contempt. Turkey, emancipated Turkey, is not to be chained to the Arab prophet or to his barbarous and fanatical followers. She is to be herself, self-contained and independent,

beholden neither to East nor West, as clearly marked off from what is called the Moslem world as from the adjacent Europeans.

2

From a third-story flat on the heights above the Rue de Pera I looked out on the most beautiful view I ever saw from a window. Below me the Sea of Marmora was lashed into foam by a cutting wind, and on either side deep blue mountains were massed against a stormy sky. To the east was the Gulf of Ismid and behind it in brilliant sunshine the high ridges of the Asiatic side. This is only a segment of the great Constantinople panorama; go up two stories and look out on either side. Now you see the Golden Horn and Stamboul and the great mosques with their domes and minarets rising above the crowded roofs of the old city. Turn again and look north and you may trace the course of the Bosphorus by the sudden sheen of its waters between the wooded hills.

There is in all the world no such site for a city, and whatever it may be within, Constantinople is all glorious without. Looking at it, one understands its lure. It is beautiful, historical and romantic; it has every conceivable utilitarian advantage. It is one of the great gates of the world and to open and close it at will should, for a strong Power be child's play. For the moment its importance is masked by the downfall of Russia and the paralysis that has fallen on all the eastward trade; but no one doubts that when Russia revives and the trade winds blow again from the East, it will once more be the lure and the prize, and possibly the object of strife and conflict between its neighbours that it has been during the lives of most of us living now.

Constantinople is the unsolved problem of the New Turkey. Kemal has deliberately turned his back on Constantinople and taken his Government into the wilds of Asia Minor. There are, from a Turkish point of view, quite sound political reasons for this step. Undeniably at Constantinople a Turkish Government is constantly subject to pressure from the European Powers, and with the Straits demilitarized its sense of security is diminished. In Constantinople the Turk feels himself smothered by foreigners. There is no more cosmopolitan city in the world ; fate and geography have attracted to it a mixed population from all the maritime nations ; Greeks, Jews, Armenians, Syrians and nondescript Levantines have for generations made it their home. These foreigners have till now run the city and given it modern conveniences, trams, telephones, engineering works, electric light and power ; and an immense quantity of their capital is locked up in these enterprises. In Constantinople Byzantine luxury has had its modern equivalent in a blend of Eastern and Western vices, which, according to the new faith, has sapped the character and killed the energy of the native-born Turk. In the bracing climate and comparative isolation of the Anatolian highlands, it is believed that he will learn to be himself and unlearn the fatal habit of running for foreign assistance (and baksheesh) on any slight emergency.

To quit Constantinople is therefore declared to be a necessary part of the policy of Turkification. The Turk, redeemed by the blessing-in-disguise of the Great War from the Ottoman Empire, that is to say, from the tyranny of Sultans who have subordinated his interests to the ruling of alien races, and of corrupt officials who have battered on his necessities, is from henceforth to be

master in his own house ; i.e. principally the "home-lands" of Anatolia ; and to show himself in earnest he solemnly goes into the wilderness and quits the city which was the pride and shame of the old regime. To the modern Turk, Constantinople reeks of the Ottoman Empire, and by leaving it, he wishes you to understand that he has made a complete break with the old tradition.

This was told me again and again within a few days of my arrival, and on looking round I could not doubt the grimness of the intention or the reality of the sacrifice. Constantinople was in a lamentable state of disrepair. The roads were terrible ; the blackened ruins of buildings destroyed by fire two or three years before still cumbered the ground on some of the most famous sites ; the palaces were falling into decay, the sanitary services were below a decent minimum. There was already the sense of faded splendour. If this were merely due to poverty one might deplore it and avert one's gaze. But there was strong evidence that it was a deliberate part of the new policy. Kemal had not once visited the city since he established himself at Angora. His Revolutionary Tribunal, oddly named the Committee of Independence, came and went, making a wind of panic as it came, and followed by a sigh of relief as it went ; but for officials to linger in the place was a crime, and to visit it except under the sternest necessity a cause of suspicion. The Constantinopolitans had all the time the uneasy feeling that in the eye of Angora they were bad Turks, and they walked warily and spoke softly for fear of the spies and informers whom they believed to be at large in their midst.

The foreigner had lost the shelter of the "Capitulations," and was exposed to the full blast of Turkish law and administration. He complained volubly that he

was living on sufferance, and might at any moment be expelled for an "indiscretion." Whatever else might be neglected, the process of Turkification by decree from Angora was going ruthlessly on, and the methods adopted would have warmed the heart of Sir Joynson Hicks. I wandered for an hour up and down the Rue de Pera in search of the English shop, and was unable to find it until a friendly Turk who spoke French walked half the length of the street to show me where it was. Naturally I was unable to find it, for its sign was in Turkish, and only a very close inspection revealed its English name in the smallest letters. All foreign shops are compelled by law to announce themselves in Turkish, and if an English, French, Italian or German name is added, it must not be in letters more than a third of the size of the Turkish inscription. While I was in the city a decree was issued that no foreign "doctor, dentist, waiter or bootblack" should ply his trade or pursue his calling except by permission of the Government; and I was told that permits were practically never given to newcomers. Attempts had been made in the previous weeks to enforce the rule that there should be no foreign employees on the trams and that no language but Turkish should be spoken over the telephone. These particular efforts had broken down, for it was plainly intimated that, if they were persisted in, trams and telephones would stop. For the time being interest had been diverted to a decree that women's skirts should not be more than a certain number of inches from the ground, and this had caused a lively rebellion among the Turkish ladies, who will almost certainly have defeated it before these lines appear. Angora has a short way with the male rebel, but so far it had been beaten in almost every battle with emancipated woman,

and she alone seemed to keep her flag flying in the neglected city.

There is a certain element of sport in life under decrees, and what Angora would do next was a lively subject of talk and speculation in Constantinople. The difficulty was to discover what Angora meant seriously, and what represented the latest fancy of ingenious officials casting about for ways of earning their salary. It used to be said in the days of Abdul Hamid that a decree of the Sultan had three days' life, the day on which it was promulgated, the day on which it was enforced, and the day on which it was broken. Many of the decrees of Angora have been equally ephemeral, but others have been enforced with ruthless thoroughness. At the time of my visit the foreigner was living from day to day in a state of perplexed uncertainty. He can work to almost any system, provided he knows that it will continue, but he cannot work to a system which changes between night and morning. He will submit to the decrees of Angora, if necessary, but he must know what they are, and which of them is intended to be enforced.

What did it all mean? the foreigners talked of xenophobia, but an earnest Kemalist assured me that nothing so gross and unenlightened was in the thoughts of Turkish reformers. He earnestly explained that if the policy hits the foreigner or seems to hit him, it is not from malice, but from national necessity. The Turk must release himself from the foreign embrace, even when it is friendly, or his national movement will be strangled at birth. He too would grieve if the ancient capital lost its place of pride and fell into decay, but even that sacrifice would have to be made, if the national cause required it. This is small consolation to the foreigner, whose life and interests are inextricably

bound up with Constantinople and its trade, and who now finds himself holding on by his eyelids, and living in increasing anxiety about what the next month or week may bring forth. He asks helplessly what he has done to deserve this treatment and what is the patriotic necessity which requires him to be frozen out. He does not want to strangle the Turk ; he only asks that the Turk shall not strangle him.

I asked Americans who were in Constantinople in the year 1915 what the Turk would have done if the Allies had succeeded in forcing the Straits, and they answered with one accord that he would have massacred the foreigners and set fire to the city. I do not know if they are right, but to this day in Constantinople, one has an uneasy sense of slumbering animosity below the surface. A Kemalist said to me that it had always been a nest of vipers, and that Kemal was unalterable in his determination to have no more to do with it.

3

There was a certain similarity in the situation at Constantinople in December, 1925 to that which I saw in Egypt when I went there as a member of the Milner Mission in 1919-20. Egypt too is one of the gates of the world, and the foreigner throngs her territory. She too complained bitterly that she was being strangled, and loudly demanded her complete independence. But there the parallel ends. For though the foreign stranglehold is strong in Cairo as in Constantinople, I cannot imagine the Egyptian pashas proposing to transfer their capital to the Fayum or the Assouan Dam. The future which they contemplated for their country was one in which foreign trade should be unchecked and the Egyptians be more and more enriched by the demand of Europe

for their long staple cotton; and they plainly saw it to be a condition of their wealth that Cairo and Alexandria should flourish and be hospitable to foreigners of all nationalities. Though it was obviously a logical part of any national emancipation, it was with great difficulty that they could be persuaded even to discuss the proposal that the "Capitulations"—i.e. the legal provisions and immunities for foreigners—should be abolished. It became evident that they were by no means easy in their minds as to what might happen if their foreign customers were compelled to submit themselves to Egyptian courts manned by Egyptian judges administering Moslem law. Moreover, the limit to taxation which the foreigner enjoyed under the Capitulations was in practice a limit for the Egyptians, who were not at all inclined to launch themselves on the uncharted seas of native finance. So whatever might have been in the minds of ardent young men, most of the staid and well-endowed seniors who had joined the Nationalist movement thought of Egyptian independence as a thing conditioned by the necessities of Egyptian foreign trade, and would have been gravely disturbed if they could have imagined themselves cut off from the foreigner or deprived of the benevolent protection of the British fleet.

Turkey is without these steady influences. The number of Turks engaged in foreign trade is small, and there is no staple trade which is bringing wealth into the country. If you listen hard, you may hear the growls of the old Turks who think the trek to Angora madness, and regard Kemal and all his works much as the White Russians do the Bolsheviks. I was told in a whisper that there was a considerable number of these, and that a still greater number among the

peasants of Anatolia was in a state of smothered rebellion against the defection from Islam of the new regime. But whether few or many, this opposition counted for nothing in Turkey as I saw it. A rigid censorship made it voiceless in the Press; the "Committee of Independence" kept vigilant watch upon its goings in and comings out, and the short shrift which was given to "reactionaries" warned it that submission to Angora was the condition of the quiet life.

Constantinople, therefore, must do what Angora tells it, and Angora, when I was in Turkey, kept saying that until it had modelled Turkish institutions on a bedrock Turkish foundation, it could think of nothing else. If there was anything to do about Constantinople, it was to bring it into line with Nationalist Turkey. Thus at the beginning of December 1925, elections—so-called—were pending for the Constantinople municipal councils. Day by day the newspapers announced that the "Popular Party" at Angora was giving anxious thought to the preparation of a list of approved candidates which on the appointed day would be presented to (and accepted by) the electors. All the newspapers said in chorus that this was beyond question the right method of procedure in the present state of "evolutionary progress," and pointed out that it would have the specially beneficent result of "bringing the local and provincial points of view of Constantinople into harmony with the necessities of the Nationalist movement."

Looking at this strange world of conflicting passions and ambitions my sympathies were very mixed. I saw character and determination in one part of the movement, ruthlessness and overweening conceit in another. Only a man of strong will and unflinching purpose could have uprooted the Turk from Constantinople and reconciled

him to the trek into Asia Minor. The idea is Oriental and reminds one of the sudden flittings of which one sees traces in the deserted cities of India. Yet behind it is an intention which is not only intelligible but worthy of respect and sympathy. One must sympathize with a man who declares boldly for a clean cut with the corrupt and bloodstained tradition of the Ottoman Empire and is ready for any surgery that will accomplish that purpose. One must sympathize with the enthusiasts who follow this lead and grimly turn their backs on the life and gaiety of the old capital to found the new one across the water. I talked to the eager spirits of the movement and could not doubt their zeal or sincerity. They spoke glowingly of their ideals and of their contempt for all material and commercial interests that stood in the way. They wanted, they told me, a Turkey purified and made new, standing on her own feet, developing a civilization of her own, clear of the barbaric fringes and foreign parasites who have sucked her blood and preyed on her vitals.

But there was a glint in their eyes as they developed this theme and one felt the old Turk to be very much alive when they went on to speak of the necessity of crushing opposition, and of what they would and must do to those who resisted the national will. Still more, as one considered the position of their great city and thought of its water-ways spreading east and west, the national will seemed to be flying in the face of nature and destiny. How could men of sense deliberately turn their backs on this splendid heritage? Even so far as it has gone, the result of their policy has been to impoverish Turkey and enrich her rivals. The port of the Piræus is flourishing, and Athens is rapidly becoming a great and populous modern city, while

Constantinople is stagnant and declining. Cruel and barbarous in its incidents as has been the exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey, it bids fair to be a permanent benefit to Greece and a dead loss to Turkey. The repatriated Greeks were among the sturdiest and hardiest of the old population of Turkey, and they are doing well in their new surroundings. The carpet industry of Smyrna is being re-established on Greek soil ; the new-comers include capable craftsmen and energetic people of the type which Greece most wants, and the loss of whom cannot at present be made good in Turkey. There the complaint was universal, that building was slow and difficult, because the foreigners who did the greater part of it had been driven from the country. As for the repatriated Turks, they have by all accounts had a sad time ; many of them have perished and many others are in the direst poverty. They presented exactly the kind of problem which the Turk is least competent to deal with, and he was without the foreign assistance which has enabled the Greeks to get through the initial stages of the transfer. I was assured by both Greeks and Turks that in the circumstances of 1922 and 1923 there was positively nothing else to do than to clear the Greeks out of Turkey, and the Turks out of Greece, but it is impossible to exaggerate the suffering which has been inflicted on scores of thousands of innocent people on both sides, or the gap which has been left in Turkey by the loss of the population which was part of the texture of her social life. It is not to be questioned that the Turks won a great victory over the Greeks or that they were justified in resisting the invasion of their homelands, but it may easily turn out that the main loss was on their side and that it was the kind of loss which

cannot be made good by any patriotic ardour, and least of all by that which declares itself independent of the foreigner.

To the Western eye, the solution of the material part of the Turkish problem is plain. Constantinople should be developed to the utmost so that it may provide a surplus to relieve the poverty of Anatolia. I have seen an Indian prince retrieve the finances of his State and obtain the means of improving its agriculture by developing one neglected little port on the coast-line of his territory, and the Turk could do the same and far more, if he maintained and developed Constantinople. He could do this and yet keep his capital where it is. But he cannot do it, if in the name of an all-Turkish Turkey, he is to harry the foreigner, impede his trade and drive him from the city. Constantinople must be a modern city or nothing, and the Turk cannot be modern without foreign aid. One feels in one's bones that if it is the deliberate policy of the Turk to neglect Constantinople or let it fall into decay, it will in the long run, be his undoing. Whoever holds these great key positions must maintain them and develop them or they will inevitably fall into other hands.

But it is useless to preach to the Turk about what he considers to be his own affair. He is determined to go his own way, and he must learn, if at all, by experience. His danger is that in buying experience he will bring upon himself just those troubles that he wishes to avoid and once more excite the wrath and cupidity of envious neighbours. This would be a calamity for the world as well as for himself, and it is for us and for all the Powers to do what is possible to avert it. Tolerance, forbearance and a readiness to understand what is genuine and praiseworthy in the aims and ideas of the New Turkey

are, for the present all that can be advised. Kemal's ways are not our ways any more than Mussolini's or Trotsky's. But at least he is not at all like Abdul Hamid, and it would be extremely dangerous to suppose that he is amenable to the methods that we applied to the old Sultans. If we are to get on with the New Turkey it will not be by the old game of diamond cut diamond, but by perfectly straightforward dealing and an honest effort to understand what is in the Turkish mind.

So far I have confined myself to impressions gleaned at Constantinople. The next step was to go to Angora and see what was happening there.

CHAPTER II

ANGORA

The Way to Angora—The Picturesque and the Squalid—A Primitive Hotel—The Turkish Achievement—A Fervent Spirit—The Firm Hand—The Functions of Parliament—Kemal First and Last—The Mosul Question—A Debate with the Turks—General Conclusions.

I

EVERYBODY told me not to go to Angora. The Greeks said I should be interned there, even if nothing worse befell me; most of the English thought it would be better avoided during the December days when the Mosul decisions of the League of Nations were pending. This seemed to me the acceptable time to be there, if the way back was reasonably certain. I consulted Turkish friends who laughed at these apprehensions, and promised me civility and courtesy. This removed all doubts; I went and returned without adventure, and I received nothing but civility and courtesy during my stay there.

To go to Angora you cross the Bosphorus by ferry and take train from the Haidar-Pasha Station, the German-built terminus of the Baghdad Railway. The train takes about twenty-six hours, an average rate of about twelve miles an hour, and considering the nature of the track you are thankful that it is no quicker. There is a

wagon-lit and even a restaurant car ; and if you can get a berth on the *wagon-lit*, the journey is by no means uncomfortable ; if not, you will spend a day and a night of anguish for reasons that need not be particularized. I was fortunate enough to get a berth.

The route lies along the Gulf of Ismid, and thence follows the rushing Sakkaria River through the gorges of the Taurus Mountains. The first part of it is delightful, but one wakes in the morning to find oneself on a vast and desolate plateau with scorched and barren mountains on the rim. There is an occasional stretch of plough, and now and again one sees a flock of black and white Angora sheep in charge of a shepherd, whose big tawny dogs come barking at the train. Most of the villages seem to be in ruins, and, for the greater part of the way one looks in vain for any sign of human habitation. Hour by hour it is the same featureless landscape ; the grass is yellow and sodden, and perpetually fades away into mud and swamp.

Angora strikes the eye with a pleasant relief after this monotony. Outwardly the place is quite imposing. It is the ancient Ancyra and still contains interesting Roman remains, especially the fine and well-preserved Temple of Augustus. The old Turkish town runs along a high ridge about 700 feet above this plateau, showing a picturesquely broken outline of weather-beaten roofs, with a few minarets rising above them, and ending abruptly in a square fortress on the southern side. On the steep face of this ridge are the blackened ruins of the Armenian quarter, burnt out, one is assured, by an accidental fire which left the Turkish houses intact, but sent the Armenians flying. Behind are the peaks of jagged volcanic-looking mountains which, when the sun comes out towards evening, are an intense blue behind the

brown and ochre of the old town. This is the background and all that there is of the picturesque.

In front is the new town built on the slopes descending to the plateau. In general aspect it very much resembles the popular idea of an American mining camp which has just struck oil. There are six or seven respectable buildings in a slightly Teutonic style of architecture—the Parliament House, the club and office of the “People’s Party,” the Soviet Embassy, the Secondary School, and certain public offices—and a score or so of distempered modern houses, in one of which the American Delegation is lodged; but except for a certain Eastern aspect, and a liberal use of mud in their construction the rest might be called shacks, and the best are hastily improvised two-storied buildings built in and out of the few old Turkish houses which stand on the site. One enters the offices of even high officials through stable yards littered with manure, and passes up creaking outside wooden staircases into tiny and dilapidated rooms.

The discomforts of this place must be seen and tasted to be realized. Where the new population, three or four thousand, including deputies, officials and clerks, is lodged is beyond guessing. The inn at which I put up gave me a room all to myself—which, I was told, was exceptional good fortune—and a clean bed, for which Allah be thanked. But there was nothing to eat in the house, and my dragoman brought me hot water from somewhere over the way. The servants slept in the hall; there was a central room (from which the bedrooms opened) in which two women were constantly cooking something for themselves over a brazier and spilling hot ashes on the floor. It smelt like an open sewer, and the adjoining sanitation was altogether

Eastern. No one speaks anything but Turkish, and I was lost when my dragoman was away. I wanted a piece of paper to write out a telegram, and supposed I had managed to make myself understood. Everybody ran, and after a quarter of an hour eight cups of Turkish coffee were brought me on a tray. Fortunately I had brought my own tea and a liberal supply of mineral water; my dragoman boiled it and made the tea and the hotel supplied toast.

Thus I got breakfast, and for the rest there was "Fresco's"—the one great cosmopolitan restaurant in the town. Here is the centre of all life and the means of sustaining life. You meet everybody at Fresco's, and if you choose carefully you can get quite wholesome roast beef and excellent light beer, which by all accounts is the one safe drink in this town. How a teetotaller could exist in Angora I have not the slightest idea, for by universal agreement the water far surpasses in destructive qualities all that the most devout abstainer has ever attributed to alcohol.

It had been raining for a whole fortnight at the beginning of December, and when I arrived it was still raining—straight downpouring tropical rain without a break in the sky from morning till night. The roads were ankle-deep in mud, and one went nowhere without goloshes. Frequently I left one of mine in the mud, and had to fish it out with the crook of my umbrella. There are a few paved roads, but these frequently had holes in them, and there was a slime on top which made slippery going in goloshes.

• There are motors in Angora, and their drivers perform incredible feats. I took one after dark with two American friends up the precipice which leads to the Ottoman Bank. We stuck finally at an elbow turn of piled-up

rocks and were thankful to grope the rest of the way on foot. Fortunately the distances are not great, for the sensation of being behind a Turkish driver fumbling for his brakes, while you are slipping back on rocks, is not one that you wish to repeat very often. There are no trees, and the landscape all round is brown and desolate. Some say that the site is the crater of an extinct volcano, and the story seems credible. Below is a great malarial swamp which—they say—has just been drained. Nevertheless one of my hosts was down with malaria when I visited him, and others were said to have only recently recovered. What the drainage may do has yet to be seen, but, so far, malaria has been the curse of the place, and in summer there is blistering heat and suffocating dust.

When the Japanese Ambassador left after a week's visit to Angora about the time that I was there, he said, like the Queen of Sheba after visiting King Solomon, that he had no more spirit left within him after he had seen the miracle that the Turks had wrought. This is an Oriental way of speaking which obscures the true moral of the Turkish achievement. One must realize what Angora is to understand what the Turks have done. That Kemal should have been able to persuade or compel the whole Turkish official class to uproot themselves from Constantinople, where they had lived in considerable comfort, not to say luxury, and to live and work in Angora is an extraordinary achievement of will-power and discipline.

They have done it, I do not for a moment doubt, from a sincerely patriotic motive, and they are resolved not to go back on it. No Turk I talked to sought for a moment to palliate the discomfort and squalor of Angora. They said it was only a beginning, and told

me frankly what I should have to put up with if I came, but insisted that the sacrifice was imposed upon them, and that they were determined to carry it through, for the supreme object of making a real Turkish nation relieved equally from foreign pressure and the "ener-vating Levantine influences" of Constantinople.

And in all this mud and squalor one does become conscious of something very much alive. Foreigners who have known the Turk for thirty years and more say that they have never seen such energy and industry as he is displaying at Angora. How much of it is waste effort I have no means of judging, but the hive buzzes furiously and Kemal does not tolerate drones. Turkish officials work from nine in the morning till six in the evening—a thing unknown at Constantinople. At Angora, as they say rather grimly, there is nothing to distract them, and it is more amusing to be in the office than anywhere else.

According to Western notions, progress is slow; according to Eastern, relatively quick. I was told again and again that, bad as conditions might seem to me now, they were miraculously improved compared with three years ago. There are plans innumerable, plans for new railways, new roads, schools, primary and secondary, in all the towns and villages, and finally for a new Angora to be built between the present city and the residence, some three miles away, of Kemal Pasha. I was told that real progress was being made with roads, and some moderate progress with railways. There was, undoubtedly, a strong, if rather crude, educational ferment visibly going on. I was conducted over the Secondary School at Angora, and saw the cheerful enthusiasm of the teachers and their determination to be up-to-date in a building which was visibly cracking.

As we talked, the rain was pouring in streams through the flimsy roof and being caught in tubs and baths in the class-rooms and corridors.

At the moment everything seemed to be lacking except this spirit. Building was stopped for lack of builders and material ; the new hotel—a quite promising-looking structure—had been three years building, and though its completion was promised in three months, no one believed the tale. Above all, capital was lacking. Everywhere it was brought home to one that Turkey was a poor country with sadly disordered finances.

The Turk, it may be said, has himself to thank for the tragedy and misery of these years. But the Powers who put the Greeks into Anatolia have also their share of responsibility, and it is not for them to throw stones. The devastation of this country is deplorable and the effort to struggle out of it into a better kind of life deserves sympathy.

2

On my way to Angora a story was told me of a Minister of a foreign Power who had lodged in the same hotel as I was going to, and occupied the corner room, which as it turned out, was assigned to me. On opening his curtains in the morning and looking down the street to the cross-roads, he saw fourteen corpses dressed in white, with fezes on their heads and large placards proclaiming their crimes on their breasts, swinging from what Coryat would have called “a goodly faire gallows.” I read with some trepidation in a newspaper I had with me that the “Committee of Independence” had held one of its “bloody assizes” at Angora on the previous day and had sentenced six “reactionaries” to the “extreme penalty.” The thought of what might be happening

at daybreak outside my window a little disturbed my slumbers the following night, and when I got up in the morning I peered anxiously through my curtains before I ventured to pull them apart. I was fortunately spared this last touch of realism.

The incident is common enough in Turkey, and no one seems to think anything of it. But what is to be said of a Government which deals thus with its "reactionaries"? It claims to be progressive, Liberal, democratic. Earnest patriots asked for my sympathy on these grounds, and immediately I thought of these corpses swinging all day, as an eye-witness described it to me, with the children playing, and passers-by going about their business with scarcely a glance in their direction. It was not only that they did it, but that nobody seemed to mind, and that modern-looking newspapers, written in polite French, regarded it as an every-day incident.

I argued with my Turkish friends and said it was horrible and repulsive to me, but they said blandly it was the only way, and its virtue lay in precisely what I called horrible. If Kemal had not courage to deal thus firmly with opponents of the national will, his movement would be overwhelmed by the Hodias (priests of the mosques) and old Hamidian pashas and the new Turkish nation would die. Kemal was right; there was no way but to inspire fear into these people. And after all, what of Europe? Were not Russia, Italy, and Greece doing the same? Had not Greece shot a whole Cabinet of Ministers, and only a few weeks ago hanged two colonels in the streets of Athens?

One has constantly to remember that everything here is built on blood and tears, and massacre and pillage. As one comes in the slow train along the Anatolian

plateau one sees everywhere the ruins of villages, the broken bridges, the debris which marks the last stages of the Greek advance. It is almost useless to try to strike a balance of guilt and innocence. Each side accuses the other of incredible atrocities, and, when the thing was once on foot, aggression and reprisal became indistinguishable. What astonished and shocked was the air of taking it all for granted. I was told quite calmly that there is no longer an Armenian question, because the Armenians who survive are too few to be dangerous or to intrigue to any purpose with foreign Powers. Those who remain will be quite useful in their place and will be unmolested.

The same logic is applied to the political movement. The Popular Party has no use for an Opposition; it will hang as many as are necessary,¹ and leave the rest alone, if they learn how to behave. Why not? They would undoubtedly hang Kemal, if he gave them the opportunity. I said to a Turk, "Kemal is the Mussolini of the East." "No," he said, "that's not right; you should say that Mussolini is the Kemal of the West."

Consider this and you get near the Turkish feeling for Kemal. He is undoubtedly a very extraordinary man and perhaps the most remarkable blend of East and West in the world to-day. To my Western eye, he more resembled a smart American than any kind of Oriental. He is certainly no darker in complexion than most Europeans; and with the square shoulders and well-knit figure of the soldier, he has the tight firm look of the successful man of business. Yet he is an all but mythical hero to the Turks, and they dwell with equal pride on his prowess in the field and his immunity

¹ Fifteen members of the Opposition were hanged in Constantinople on July 11 for engaging in a plot to assassinate Kemal.

to the strong liquors which defeat his friends. I heard glorious and no doubt mythical tales of entertainments at his villa which would equal any in the annals of Peter the Great, and they always ended the same way. As the day dawned the Ghazi sat cool and alone, immersed in a German book on strategy, though all his friends were laid low. Such things are expected from saviours of their country in Eastern lands, and the Turks seemed to take special pleasure in decking them out with detail and circumstance.

Kemal then, is the unique man who is law unto himself, the great general, the saviour of his country, the statesman, the law-giver, the founder of the new dispensation, the man who has raised Turkey from the depths and enabled her to speak as equal to equals in the councils of Europe. If one must find a Western parallel, he is Napoleon to the Turks. And yet, if one speaks of him as "dictator," one is immediately pulled up. He does everything that he does because the "People's Party" is with him, and the "People's Party" has an overwhelming majority in Parliament. They think together, act together in perfect unison, and they are entitled to say that their will shall not be obstructed by any minority. They do say it to such purpose that nearly all would-be opposition candidates and voters think it more prudent to remain at home. A few "critics" are permitted, but strictly on their good behaviour. And yet, is the Parliament nothing? With one voice its deputies say "No." They take their duties very seriously. The session lasts for six months, and for that period they must remain continuously at Angora, which in itself is extremely unpleasant. I went into the Assembly and watched it at work in a spacious oblong hall, with galleries all round, and the President's box with gilt chairs in it on

one side. On the floor were about 300 extremely sedate black-coated gentlemen, each with his desk in front of him, listening attentively to a speaker in the tribune at one end of the hall. The President, seated on a dais high above the tribune, repeatedly (and it seemed to me unnecessarily) tapped his desk with a little wand. Beside him was the clerk, who read the resolution before the House, and the division was taken by a show of hands. Carried unanimously.

I have no idea what the motion was, but I was informed that the question before the House was that of the recent disturbances at Erzerum. Anyhow, the proceedings were solemn and decorous and would have done credit to any European assembly. Nor could it be said that the deputies were dummies. The speaker in the tribune was a Minister, and he was repeatedly interrupted by questions from different parts of the House, which he appeared to answer quite civilly and good-temperedly.

I had half an hour's interview with the President, and we compared the Turkish with the British, American and French Constitutions. It had borrowed from each, he told me, but had contributed something essentially Turkish of its own. We got into very deep waters about proceedings on the Budget—I was talking French to an interpreter who translated into Turkish—but I gathered that the Turks in their wisdom had preferred the French to the British procedure. Their Budget went to a Committee on Finance, and was by them returned to the House. He said it would be proper for the Government to resign if its Budget were rejected by the Committee, but he did not think that likely to happen. From all quarters I heard that it was most unlikely.

I report the facts as they appear on the surface, and the reader must make of them what he can. An instance

was quoted to me with some pride in which the Assembly had rejected a measure which Kemal recommended to it, but I do not believe that this is a frequent occurrence. In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred what Kemal says goes, and on critical occasions he sits in his box and issues orders to the deputies below. But he is shrewd enough to see the advantages of a democratic façade, and I have no doubt, sensible enough to take advice from his deputies on the administrative details on which he is unlikely to have expert knowledge.

But one thing was clear after a short time in this place. Government and Parliament are first and last Kemal, and no one knows what would happen to the new republic, if he were to pass from the scene.

3

I reached Angora, as luck would have it, just at the critical moment when the League decision about Mosul was hourly expected, and the city was evidently in a high state of perturbation and anxiety. Nevertheless I was received everywhere with the utmost courtesy, and encouraged to speak my mind with absolute freedom.

What was said to me or what I said to the Turkish officials may be of little consequence, yet so far as it reveals the mind of the Turk it may be worth recording. I gave my word of honour that I would mention no names in what I wrote, so this narrative must be purely impersonal.

My own part may be briefly summarized. Everywhere I limited myself to saying that though there was much sympathy in England with the new Turkish movement and there had been lively criticism of the rigid attitude taken up by the Government last September at Geneva, yet that any act of violence by the Turks, such as an

attempt to seize Mosul by a *coup de main*, would instantly consolidate British opinion against Turkey, and be taken as an offence not only against us, but against the League of Nations, and as such, be of special concern to members of the Liberal Party and even the Labour Party. I reminded the Turks that even in the old days all the Powers had claimed to take part when coercion was applied to Turkey, and asked them whether they thought it would be in their interest that Italy, for example, should conduct operations in Asia Minor.

I repeated this as often and as emphatically as I could, and having the opportunity of meeting certain of the most important Turkish journalists, I took occasion to say that I had read their articles—most Turkish papers have a French as well as a Turkish edition—on the Mosul question with great regret; that I thought they were inflaming the atmosphere dangerously and unnecessarily, and that they could have no idea of the extent to which they were playing into the hands of the enemies of Turkey, whom they were providing with material for inflaming feeling in Europe.

This seemed to be a new idea to most of them. They said they were Turkish journalists voicing Turkish opinion, and had never supposed that what they wrote was being telegraphed and published abroad. I said it was so, and they must very seriously reckon with it.

Whether anything of all this made any impression is more than I can say. Their answer in general was to pour out the Turkish case in a flood of fervent words which left me in no doubt about their passionate concern with it. Why should Great Britain, with all her great Empire, seize upon this little corner of their territory, a thing trivial to her, but of vital importance to them? Had not the League of Nations itself declared

that Mosul was an integral part of Turkey until she renounced her rights? How could Turkey renounce her rights to the *force majeure* of foreign Powers without losing her self-respect and the position of legal equality which she claimed with other Powers? Had not Lord Curzon promised them at Geneva that no decision should be taken without their consent, and had he not pointed to the necessity of unanimity on the Council as the guarantee of that promise? Was it fair treatment to invoke the Hague Court at the last moment to deprive them of the promised guarantee by varying the definition of "unanimity"? What was proposed was to seize lawful Turkish territory under cover of a decision of the League of Nations. Turkey would never consent to that, and there would be no solution, if we insisted on it.

This was followed by an appeal. We professed sympathy with the new regime in Turkey and with the effort it was making to institute reforms and to bring the country into line with modern progress. But had we no consideration for its moral position and the damage which Kemal Pasha would suffer in the eyes of the Turkish people, if he were forced to submit on a point of national honour? The success and prestige of the new order was staked on the Mosul question, and if Great Britain persisted in her present line, she might destroy the new movement and plunge Turkey back into darkness just when she was struggling back into the light.

Finally the Kurdish question was opened up, and I was told that we were making an impossible situation for Turkey by taking over a large block of Kurds into British territory. These would be a focus of agitation for the Kurds within the Turkish boundary and greatly

complicate the task of internal government. Why should we want these Kurds, the pets of Abdul Hamid who used them to massacre the Armenians—and to put it gently—the least civilized of their population? The Turks fear the Kurds as the old Austrian Empire feared the Serbs, and they imagine that we shall give them privileges and indulgences which will excite the envy of those within their own territory.

The argument went backwards and forwards for the best part of three days, from the time I arrived up to the very moment when the critical Cabinet began its sitting. That sitting lasted from three in the afternoon till two in the morning, and from my windows in the little inn, I heard the noise of many motors, and the buzz in the streets as it broke up. In the morning I was told that nothing had been finally decided, but it was clear that the hive had been furiously stirred and that its inhabitants were very angry.

I left Angora in the same divided state of mind as I had left Constantinople. The claim of the Turks to have made great sacrifices for the new national movement is certainly not exaggerated. Only a very determined people could have forsaken Constantinople for Angora, or persisted in their purpose after seven years of experience of life in that place. The fervour of the Kemalist to make something new and his resolve to put behind him the Ottoman tradition were quite genuine things which one would have wished our own Government to support and encourage, and it seemed a thousand pities that the Mosul affair should have come in to estrange us just when our friendship might have been helpful and welcome. On the other hand there was self-sufficiency and savage intolerance venting itself in the ruthless crushing of honest opponents, and there

was a technical incompetence which was plain to see. Angora might cut itself off from the old Turkey, but the conflict between the old Adam and the new man was evidently still going on within its gates. I came away feeling it imperative that there should be reasonable give-and-take between us and the Turks after the Mosul decision, and that we should do everything in our power to heal the wound that it inflicted. So I telegraphed home at the time, and as I write these words, it is announced that a conciliatory policy in the hands of a skilful and sympathetic Ambassador¹ has brought this incident to a close. The way should now be open to a friendly, straightforward and helpful relationship with the Turks, and the boggy of a Turkish-Bolshevist alliance for our undoing in Iraq and elsewhere be laid to rest.

But most of all one hopes that there may at last be an end to the tale of massacre and reprisal which has made a shambles of the Near East. The sufferings endured by innocent people in all this region during the last twelve years are beyond the power of words to describe. The deportations alone, with all the horrors attending them—families torn asunder, children lost on the way, old and young dying of exposure and starvation—were an immeasurable calamity, and they were only the end of an interminable story of slaughter and conflict. One can travel nowhere along the eastern shores of the Mediterranean or through the uplands of Anatolia without seeing the devastation or hearing intolerable stories of wrong and suffering. At the end of it all one feels that it is not policy but simple human kindness which is needed for the healing of these nations. There is general agreement that the Turk is a man of simple

¹ Sir Ronald Lindsay.

and kindly disposition if his religious or racial animosities are not inflamed, and what is most to be hoped of the New Turkey is that it will give these qualities fair scope whatever its constitution may be.

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Coming from Angora I went to stay in a charming house high above the Bosphorus at the point (just beyond Bebek) where it turns sharply to the north on its way to the Black Sea. From here one looks out on an enchanting prospect. Just below is one of the great round towers erected by Mohammed II on his way to the capture of Constantinople, and on the opposite shore is an ancient castle of Norman baronial aspect. Both shores are studded with villas and palaces with cypresses in their gardens ; and there are numerous little towns and villages either at the water's edge or running steeply down to it through a pleasant verdure. A few minarets give the Eastern touch, and just opposite are " the sweet waters of Asia." There is a flash of sunlight on white and pink walls ; the waters are very blue, and the distant mountains shadowed with purple. Nothing could be more peaceful or more delightful to the eye. One would say that if ever there was a favoured land it is this.

Just behind are the buildings of Robert College, the famous American institution which is educating 600 boys from twenty different nationalities—Turk, Greek, Bulgarian, Persian, Syrian, Rumanian, Serb, Russian, Armenian, and all the tribes from the Caspian to the Mediterranean. Christian and Moslem live here side by side in perfect amity, and all use English as their common speech. The courage and determination with which Dr. Gates and his staff have persisted in their work through all the difficulties and dangers of the past twelve

years are beyond praise, and constitute a splendid example of American effort. The lads at Robert College are receiving as good an education of the modern kind as almost any similar number in America or England; and, what is even more important, they are all the time gaining moral discipline and learning lessons of charity and good will in a community which is a veritable League of Nations in miniature.

If the nations and races which these lads represent could follow their example, there would soon be peace and progress in this land. When one sees it in the concrete, it seems supremely a question of education.

PART TWO

EGYPT

CHAPTER III

FROM TURKEY TO EGYPT

Turkey and Egypt Contrasted—Egypt and the Foreigners—The Anglo-Egyptian Problem—Causes of Trouble—Egypt and the War—The Protectorate—Blunders and Disorder—The Milner Mission—The Report and the Reasons for it—Many Misunderstandings—The Murder of the Sirdar—Recent History.

I

OUTWARDLY there could be no greater contrast than between Turkey and Egypt. Egypt, as one comes to it from Turkey, seems extraordinarily prosperous and its people very happy and light-hearted. Outside America I know of no town where in a small space one can see so many large and rich-looking houses in process of construction as in Cairo. They are not all of them beautiful houses, but they are undoubtedly very costly. It is costly to build an imitation Gothic cathedral for your private dwelling ; it is costly to put in Moorish ceilings and Arabesque marble floors, to have large and lofty rooms and loggias with marble balconies. Scores of houses with these embellishments are rising from the ground in the modern parts of Cairo, and one rich pasha vies with another in showing the amplitude of his purse. The roads are broad and (with certain exceptions) well kept ; luxurious motor-cars abound ; there is a dazzle of expensive finery which is not less alluring because the face of

the wearer is half-veiled. The rich Cairene observes the old customs ; he wears his fez (or tarbush, as it is called in Egypt) with pride, his womenkind are screened from male society, and if he is not a good Moslem he keeps it to himself.

But in spite of everything he contrives to be far more modern than the hatted out-of-elbow Turk. He lives like a Parisian ; he has a club which, in cuisine and luxurious appointments, is second to none in London ; he overflows in hospitality to the foreigner and especially to the Englishman. If a Turk reflects on the matter at all, he must think with some bitterness of his own state—reduced to nine millions of population, thrown back upon the wilds of Asia Minor, his ancient capital neglected and impoverished—while this former province of the Ottoman Empire waxes fat and boasts its fourteen millions of people.

Modern Egypt is the work of many hands, and I would not for a moment belittle what Egyptians have done for it. The Khedive Ismail had many vices, but he was as extravagant in public works as in all else, and Cairo owes much to his scheming brain. Yet no Egyptian would deny that the foreigner, and above all the British, have contributed. Egypt, as it is to-day, is a unique example of the co-operation of the East and West. British capitalists, British engineers, British administrators have worked hand in hand with Egyptians, and both have reaped an immense harvest from this uniquely fertile land.

And yet the Egyptian is torn by the same emotions as the Turk. He is blessed—and cursed—by a geographical position which is extremely favourable to his enrichment, but which at the same time has an absorbing interest for European Powers. His country lies across

the principal highway between Europe and Asia ; its main commodity is the cotton in which European as well as Egyptian capital is invested, and which needs a highly developed European organization for its development and marketing. His two principal cities are as much European as Egyptian ; there are large foreign communities in both ; French, English, Italian and Greek are spoken in them as glibly as Arabic.

All this he wants to keep, for his own wealth depends upon it, but he feels the protectorate of a foreign Power to be a servitude which is unworthy of free men claiming to possess their own country. And yet in his heart he is aware that without one foreign Power to stand benevolently between him and the other foreign Powers, his position would be full of peril. His demand is for "complete independence," but in a sense interpreted by himself, which is that he shall govern his own country in his own way and of his own free will accept the disinterested assistance and advice of a friendly European Power, which shall scrupulously respect the theory of his sovereignty.

This rôle he assigns to Great Britain. There was no more doubt about that in January, 1926, when I revisited Egypt than six years ago when I went there as a member of the Milner Mission. As between Egypt and Britain, the atmosphere was far more friendly at the later period than at the earlier ; and I found everywhere a genuine desire to make an end of the Anglo-Egyptian quarrel and to settle down on some footing which would give the country a rest from agitation and politics. It would be useless and tedious to enter into details about the intricate political situation which was the chief subject of conversation during my visit, but, more than ever, I had brought home to me certain considerations of

history and fact which must be borne in mind by ourselves and the Egyptians, if we are to live amicably together, as I hope we shall. Let me touch as briefly as I can on some of these.

The part which Egyptian Nationalists assign to Great Britain in their plans for the future of their country is difficult and delicate—more difficult and delicate than some of them seem to realize. It is not an impossible part, and I believe the British people to be more capable of it than any others, but it depends in the first place upon both parties clearly understanding what has happened between them, and large numbers on both sides do not understand. Many British people think that Egypt was a part of the British Empire which recent Governments have foolishly and needlessly abandoned. Many Egyptians think that Great Britain has been foiled in a conspiracy to seize Egypt and extinguish its independence. Neither of these things is true, but the truth is a long story which cannot be told here, and I must be content to glance at a few points in it.

A great deal of the truth can be put into two sentences. Before and up to the War the British representative in Egypt was Agent or Consul-General, recognized by courtesy to be the doyen of the foreign representatives, but not otherwise raised in rank above his fellows; and the Government was in theory carried on by the Khedive, the Council of Egyptian Ministers and an Egyptian Assembly, all acknowledging the suzerainty of the Sultan of Turkey. After the War the British representative was a High Commissioner, and incidentally a distinguished soldier, governing what was called a "Protectorate" by martial law. The transition from the first to the last of these things was the main cause of the trouble which led to the rebellion of March, 1919, and if we can

understand what was implied in it, we shall have the clue to the politics of Egypt since the War.

• It may be said that the former government of Egypt was only in theory what I have described it to be. In fact, the British governed Egypt during the whole forty years of the occupation from 1884 onwards. That is quite true. Lord Cromer and his successors, having the British Government and the Army of Occupation behind them, did in fact govern Egypt and for the most part governed it wisely and well. But the theory was, from the Egyptian point of view, all-important. It marked the fact that we had not absorbed Egypt into the British Empire; it was a guarantee of our good faith when we said, as we did many times in the early days, that our occupation was only temporary, and in the later days that our main object was to render the Egyptians fit to govern their own country. It was also a guarantee to the European Powers that we meant what we said when we pledged ourselves not to alter the status of Egypt.

All this was suddenly changed in October, 1914, when we found ourselves at war with the Turks. The Sultan of Turkey was still at that moment the lawful suzerain of the Egyptian people, and his entry into the war on the side of our enemies automatically converted them into enemy aliens *vis à vis* the British people. Something had to be done to regularize this situation. It could undoubtedly have been regularized by the annexation of Egypt, but as Lord Grey has explained in his *Twenty-five Years*, there were very serious objections to that, apart from our previous pledges to the Egyptian people. It might have raised a very difficult question with our European Allies; it might have caused angry feelings not only in Egypt, but in India and other Moslem

countries which were loyal and helpful. It would certainly not have made a favourable impression upon opinion generally that we should have seemed to be seizing the first opportunity created by the War to annex a rich and fertile country to the British Empire.

So for very good reasons annexation was rejected, and we turned instead to the legal fiction of a "Protectorate," with a promise to revise the whole situation when the War was over. It was at that moment "any port in a storm." We were uncertain ourselves what the word meant or what it legally implied beyond a veto on the liberty of the protected people to pursue a foreign policy or to engage in war on their own account. But it served the purpose of keeping the Egyptians within the British camp for the duration of the War, and it was accompanied by a pledge that they would not be compelled to take part in the War against their former suzerain, the Sultan of Turkey. On that understanding they accepted it, and at that moment they desired nothing less than to be drawn in on the one side or the other. As the War proceeded, they were more or less drawn in, and it was subsequently one of their grievances that the fellahin had been practically (though not nominally) compelled to serve in the Labour Battalions for the Palestine Expedition. This, I rather think, was an afterthought. A few village headmen and provincial governors abused their powers of recruiting and requisitioning, but on the whole, service in these battalions was lucrative and popular, and the great majority of the Egyptian people claimed the credit which was justly due to them for having given loyal and useful help to the British Empire in the War, and relied on it for the obtaining of rewards and concessions when the War was over.

2

Then began the series of blunders which has produced the present situation. Egypt was unthanked for her services in the War, and when the Egyptian leaders proposed to visit England and discuss the future of their country with the British Government, they were turned from the door and told to wait till other more important questions were settled. Egyptian Ministers, thereupon, resigned; the extremest Nationalists under Zaghlul took the field, and the whole country was soon in a seethe of excitement. It was now said that the worst construction of the "Protectorate" was justified, and that the British really did mean, under cover of that word, to annex Egypt and extinguish its independence, both in theory and in fact. The Government met the situation by deporting Zaghlul and his three most important colleagues to Malta, whereupon disorder broke out in all parts of the country, and for ten days there was looting, pillaging and murder. Two British officers and five other ranks, as well as an Inspector of Prisons, were murdered in exceptionally brutal circumstances at Deirut, and communications between Cairo and the rest of the country were broken for a week.

With the forces then at his disposal, Lord Allenby had no difficulty in suppressing these disturbances, but as violence died down, passive resistance sprang up, and though the British Government now turned to a conciliatory policy, the Egyptians were unappeased. All through the year 1919 the agitation continued, and when the Milner Mission went out in the month of November it found itself completely boycotted. The order had gone out that no Nationalist was to appear before it, or to enter into communication with its members; and

it was intimated that the breaking of this embargo would be followed by severe penalties. These were not idle words. Two of the Egyptian Ministers who with great courage had undertaken to form a Government to carry on while the Mission was in Egypt had bombs thrown at them and barely escaped with their lives. My own visit to Tantah, where I had gone to inquire into the causes of the rebellion, led to a serious riot, with much bloodshed and some loss of life. To this day I have a vivid recollection of a dark night on which a little Egyptian boy led me through winding lanes to my lodging in that city, while the mob was out after me in the main streets. The growl of that mob has still a rather haunting sound.

For a fortnight after we arrived in Cairo we sat marooned in the Hotel Semiramis with sentries at every door, machine-guns at the corners, and many of the windows boarded up lest we should be sniped from the streets. All of us were under orders not to go out unless accompanied by detectives assigned to us, and all of us, if I remember rightly, came simultaneously to the conclusion that these precautions were useless, and within a few days were walking about at large in the streets and bazaars of Cairo.

And so gradually we began to discover certain things about Egypt which were not at all apparent on the surface. The Egyptians were on the surface very angry, but apart from the group of fanatics who constituted the murder gang, the great majority wanted a reconciliation. After the manner of Eastern politicians, they had got entangled in formulas which led logically to a complete break, but most of them were quite aware that this would be even more disastrous to them than to us. The idea that we had come to rivet new chains on them

was strong in their minds when we arrived, but it was gradually dispelled by informal talks with some of those who were pledged to boycott us officially. In the subsequent years I have read articles in newspapers which asserted that I exerted some hypnotic influence upon Lord Milner and my colleagues which caused them to stray from the straight path that the Government had intended them to follow. This is nonsense; we all came by slightly different roads to the same conclusion, and from beginning to end we had no controversy or quarrel about it. If my own part was any different from that of my colleagues it was merely that some of the Egyptians chose to regard me as the one member of the Mission who, being neither a soldier nor officially connected with the Government, might be approached without formally breaking the boycott. So I found myself being conveyed in closed cars with drawn blinds to whispering interviews behind locked doors with men whose names I never heard, and in houses which I could never discover again. This was no doubt a departure from the strictly official way of doing business, but my hosts were always profusely apologetic, and since they evidently desired to build a bridge, I believe it was useful.

The rest has been told in the Report of the Milner Mission, and I will not go over the ground again. I suppose that if we had been a Commission of the ordinary kind, we should have been bound by our terms of reference to return home after a brief stay in the country and report that there was no form of constitution "under the Protectorate" which would bring peace to the country, or any form of Government possible except the continuance of martial law and its imposition by *force majeure*. But our Chairman was a Cabinet Minister

who might be presumed to know the mind of the Government, and he—very rightly in my opinion—decided that we ought not to be reduced to this until we had explored all other possibilities. I am impenitent in the view that the treaty proposed in the report of the Mission by which Great Britain would have granted independence to Egypt and the Egyptians have reciprocally undertaken to respect the rights and essential interests of Great Britain, was the best solution possible and a far better one than that adopted by the Government eighteen months later, which granted independence unconditionally and left the reserved questions to be settled afterwards with the Egyptian Ministers and Parliament.

3

But the misfortune of the Milner Report was that it took the Government and the public by surprise. Ministers who were in office in the year 1920 have told me in subsequent years that they knew nothing of our proceedings between November, 1919, and December, 1920, and since Lord Milner resigned almost immediately after the Report was presented, there was no one in the Cabinet to explain it or defend it against its opponents. Though, as I have shown, it was strictly in sequence with the pre-war history of the British connexion with Egypt, it struck Ministers as revolutionary, and as an abandonment and even a betrayal of British interests. Cabinet Ministers, it appeared, had fallen, like ordinary folk, into the habit of thinking of Egypt as an integral part of the British Empire ; one of the most distinguished of them, to whom I had introduced certain of the Egyptian leaders, opened the conversation by addressing them as citizens of the British Empire and politely expressing the hope that Egypt would soon be the most

contented of the "Dominions." Of course, if this was the true doctrine, there was only one thing to do, and that was to suspend all "parleying with rebels" and stamp out their movement by force. But this was least of all in the mind of that Minister, or, as the event proved, of the Government. It was simply that he (and they) shared the general haze about the status of Egypt and our own position.

Lord Milner was an expert on that subject. He knew the history of the British occupation both from personal experience and from long study of it, and no argument was needed to persuade him that the granting of independence to Egypt in the manner defined in the Report was the logical and honourable development of the original policy and of the pledges we had given to the Egyptians. If there is one thing that experience should teach Western man in his dealings with Eastern, it is that he cannot go on indefinitely declaring it to be his mission to emancipate an Eastern country and to render it fit for self-government without being taken seriously by those to whom he has given these assurances. Nor, it may be added, can he give assurances to other Powers of the disinterestedness of his action and his determination to respect the status of a country that he occupies without being held to account if he breaks them. When the War ended, the Egyptian question raised both these issues in their acutest form in an atmosphere charged with the electricity of "self-determination"; and if we attached any value to our pledges, we were bound to look for a solution which harmonized the "essential interests" of Great Britain with the independence of Egypt. I wrote a memorandum to this effect within three weeks of our arrival in Egypt and Lord Milner told me at once that he was in entire agreement with it.

The opportunity was lost in 1920, and for that both parties must take the blame. The Government delayed, Zaghlul renewed his agitation and enlarged his claims, and by so doing hardened British opinion. Then a year later we gave with a bad grace more than the Milner Mission had proposed and in the manner which they had most wished to avoid. The reserved questions, instead of being settled before the Egyptians were launched on their career of independence, now became a blighting subject of controversy with Egyptian Ministers and an Egyptian Assembly assumed to be independent. Instead of concentrating on their internal work, Egyptian Ministers were tempted to agitate upon these unsettled external questions, and still worse, an anti-British atmosphere was created which was fatal to the continued co-operation that Egyptians themselves had admitted to be necessary for at least a transitional stage. They treated retiring British officials fairly and even generously, but there was neither the goodwill nor the assured prospect for the future which might have tempted the best of these officials to stay and throw in their lot voluntarily with the new Egyptian Government. The new Constitution was framed in an atmosphere of bitterness and excitement, and when Zaghlul failed, as he was bound to, in pressing his demands upon Mr. MacDonald's Government, the murder gang again raised its head and the assassination of the Sirdar followed.

Then came the British Proclamation, the withdrawal of Zaghlul, the practical suspension of the Constitution and the accession to power of a new Government under Ziwar Pasha, a courageous, friendly man, who governed without Parliament for the next sixteen months. There were some pains and penalties, or threats of them, in

the Proclamation, which all wise men regretted as soon as they had time to think, and these gave the extremist movement a fresh fillip just at the moment when it seemed to be most discredited. But the Egyptians, or the great majority of them, recognized, I think, that the suspension of the Constitution was an inevitable consequence, and were not sorry that an interval should be given for all parties to reconsider themselves. But when after a year, the Constitution was still in suspense, and though Parliament had been dissolved, the Ministry was apparently preparing to rule for an indefinite period without it, discontent began to revive and a renewal of the old agitation was threatened. By this time a fresh complication had arisen, for King Fuad, who is not as popular with his subjects as might be desired, was generally supposed to have captured the Government and to be running it in ways which were repugnant to his rôle as a constitutional sovereign. This might have mattered little if they had been popular ways, but, for good reasons or bad, they happened to be extremely unpopular ; and it was now freely said that after promising Egypt her independence, we were fastening on her the kind of Oriental tyranny that she most disliked.

This was the situation to which the new High Commissioner, Lord Lloyd, succeeded, and I can well imagine a man who came new to Egypt being almost in despair at the tangle which he was expected to unravel. The Zaghlul Ministry had foundered on the rock of the reserved questions and been finally discredited by the murder of the Sirdar ; the friendly Ministry was becoming more and more unpopular ; the idea always in favour with a certain school of Egyptian officials of "governing through the Palace" with a suspended Constitution, evidently would not work, if the "Palace"

was King Fuad. Within a few weeks of his arrival Lord Lloyd found it necessary to procure the dismissal of the King's favourite Nashaat and to take his stand on a return to Constitutionalism.

These were roughly the circumstances when I revisited Egypt early in January of this year. The inferences and conclusions to be drawn from them I must leave to another chapter.

CHAPTER IV

POLITICS IN EGYPT

The Position in 1926—The Necessities of Egypt—The Essential British Interests—Internal Government—Conditions of Success—The Cromer Method—Position of the High Commissioner—Meaning and Consequences of Independence—A Choice of Alternatives—Some Social Questions—Education, Housing, Public Security—Work for Egyptian Governments.

I

I FOUND my old friends in Egypt and especially those who had taken moderate views, greatly concerned about the situation described in the previous pages, but genuinely anxious to find a peaceful solution. The High Commissioner had talked about a return to Constitutionalism, but how was it to be achieved? Everything at present was unconstitutional, and there could be no elections without a new electoral law which, without Parliament to sanction it, would itself be unconstitutional. They recognized that Ziwar, the Prime Minister, had served us well at a peculiarly difficult moment and that we could not be asked to throw him over or treat him ungratefully. But it was not in Ziwar's interest that the present situation should be prolonged, for he would come up against a rising tide of popular indignation which would surely be his ruin.

We went backwards and forwards over this ground for ten days, not, I hope, altogether without profit and

with (I hope) the minimum of embarrassment to the High Commissioner, with whom the decision rested. The solution which he adopted of hastening forward the election was, I think, perfectly sound, and in consonance with his own stand on Constitutionalism. The elections, as foreseen by all parties, resulted in an immense Zaghlulist majority, and the formation after it of the Coalition Ministry under Adly Pasha, which was contemplated in January. But these events do not affect the essential points in a good understanding between us and the Egyptians, and it is as important as ever that both we and they should realize what these are.

First, it is fated that so long as we have an Eastern Empire, we and the Egyptians should live together. Our partnership may take different forms, but it cannot be dissolved. The reasons for that are written large on the map and I need not labour them. I can imagine a patriotic Egyptian cursing the accident of geography which has set his country athwart one of the great highways of the world and focused on it the envious attention of the maritime Powers. But he cannot avoid it, and he reaps enormous material advantages from it. If, by a miracle, his country could be removed to some backwater, away from the main routes of the world, it might have complete independence, but there would be an end of the wealth and the prosperous trade which make it what it is. The problem for the Egyptian is how, being where he is, he can keep the advantages which nature has given him and at the same time obtain the largest measure of control over his own affairs.

The only solution, as the world is to-day, is that he should obtain the benevolent assistance of a Power strong enough to guarantee him against attack but

willing in other respects to grant him his freedom. In another millennium the world may be so ordered that a little nation in a key position may have nothing to fear, but it is not so ordered to-day. If we consider either the past history of Egypt or the scarcely veiled contentions of the Mediterranean Powers at the present time, we can hardly doubt what would follow, if Great Britain withdrew her protection from Egypt. The choice for Egypt, then, is not between standing alone and accepting British protection ; it is between one kind of patron and another—the British patron, the French patron, the Italian patron.

It is certain that either will exact terms, for Governments do not enter into these relations unconditionally, and it is inevitable that these terms should encroach upon the legal theory of sovereignty as understood by international lawyers. The point for Egyptians to consider is whether, supposing Great Britain acceded to the demands of the extreme Nationalists (or what they appear to be) and retired altogether from Egypt, they would stand to gain anything at all from the point of view of their independence. It is out of my province to discuss what might happen if France succeeded to our position, or if Signor Mussolini set up his flag in Cairo. I mean nothing invidious to either of these Powers in raising the hypothesis. It is sufficient to say that Great Britain has a record of disinterested service to Egypt which even extreme Nationalists acknowledge, and that by her practice in other parts of the world she has shown her capacity of rendering just such services as Egypt needs with the least encroachment upon the liberties of those who accept them.

I can imagine an Egyptian objecting that this statement is one-sided, that it is not a question of Great

Britain offering and Egypt accepting a "service," but of Great Britain keeping hold of what she thinks to be a very desirable possession. Undoubtedly the British people have benefited by the occupation of Egypt, and they have taken pride in what they have been accustomed to regard as a creditable part of their imperial work. It is, one may even admit, a certain mortification to them to discover that their method of government is not acceptable to the Egyptian people. By all means let us avoid cant in this matter. But from the Egyptian point of view, the question remains the same, whatever terms may be used about our relations with Egypt. Whether we are rendering a "service" to a grateful people or casting our shield over a reluctant one, we are doing something which, in the present state of the world, must be done for Egypt; and if we cease to do it, somebody else will, and perhaps after a period in which she has once more been the centre of European conflict.

I do not think this argument would be disputed by Egyptians who have reflected on the circumstances. I have found few who do not say earnestly that they deplore the quarrel with Great Britain and wish for nothing so much as an honourable reconciliation. The difficulty in Egypt, as elsewhere, is that in the heat of agitation politicians have committed themselves to formulas which are not easily reconciled with facts and which in the East, more than elsewhere, are pursued with a ruthless logic. In common with my colleagues on the Milner Mission, I have spent interminable hours in trying to find words which would reconcile what all parties acknowledged to be the facts with the formulas to which politicians were pledged, and we came in the end to speak of it as the "word game." I believe

it is possible to reconcile the essential independence of Egypt as a self-governing country with the interests of the British Empire, and I believe that the British people are better able than almost any others to solve that particular problem. But an interminable kicking against the pricks on one side and beating about the bush on the other will never solve it, and after six years of this process I hope there will be frank dealing in what remains to be settled.

The essential British interests are the security of the Suez Canal, the *status quo* in the Sudan, the maintenance of order and solvency in Egypt proper. I sympathize with the Egyptians who object to the implications of the phrase "Army of Occupation," and would wish everything possible done to avoid the impression that their country is being occupied. But a small and efficient force to protect our communications is a necessity to us and the Egyptians spoil their own case by objecting to it. Similarly, with the Sudan. Personally I think it is a pity that that sleeping dog was not let lie on the convenient resting-place provided by the Convention of 1899. But the Egyptians must realize that it is useless to keep hammering at this question. Their claim to bring the Sudan within the sphere of the Egyptian Government is not, in our opinion, founded on either law or fact, and it is beyond reason that we should be expected to concede it. They must take it that what they failed to obtain from the Labour Government, 1924, they will fail to obtain from any British Government. We acknowledge freely that Egypt has a vital interest in the disposal of the waters of the Nile, and so far as this enters into the Sudan question it ought to be settled by the establishment of an impartial Nile Conservancy Board on which Egypt would be adequately

represented. But so far as the government of the Sudan is concerned, Egyptian politicians must have the practical good sense to make terms with the facts, as any European Government in a similar position would be compelled to do.

2

Supposing these reserved questions are amicably settled, as I believe they will be, what are the prospects of an independent self-governing Egypt? I believe they are good. There are many able and public-spirited men among Egyptian politicians who should be free to concentrate upon internal problems, when politics run in normal channels. There is a Civil Service in working order with a great many officials trained in the British school. The country is rich and there should be no difficulty about taxation, unless it is the limit imposed by the Capitulations. As a matter of fact, the internal government has for the last four years been in the hands of Egyptians, and there has been nothing that can be called a breakdown. I see no reason why there should be any in the future.

Western people have fallen into the habit of saying that the East is unable to govern itself and one hears this repeated, to the great irritation of the East, as if it were self-evident. As an unqualified proposition it is manifestly untrue, for a great part of the East has from time immemorial governed itself, and not on the whole with greater catastrophes and disasters than have attended government in the West. What is meant, I suppose, is that the East will not or cannot govern itself in the Western way, which is very likely true. It has ways which are not our ways; it is naturally undemocratic, it is indulgent to offences such as nepotism and corrup-

tion which we profess to abhor, it dislikes being hustled into what we call efficiency. The special difficulty of the Egyptians in governing their country is that they have to satisfy both East and West. They have a large peasant population living in a purely Oriental way in the small towns and villages, and a large European population living in a Western way in the two big cities of Cairo and Alexandria. Both must be reasonably well satisfied, if an Egyptian Government is to prosper, and this means that not only must order be kept, law administered and crime dealt with, as the commercially-minded European expects, but that a great variety of technical services must be maintained at a much higher level than is required in most Oriental countries.

Here a word of warning may be permitted. If the Egyptians yielded to the Turkish vanity of doing everything for themselves, or to the anti-foreign tendencies which one saw at work in Turkey, they would surely come to disaster. Turkey may relapse into a purely Oriental country ; Egypt cannot. Her fortunes are too deeply committed to her connexions with Europe, and she is too much bound up with the Europeans who live in her cities, for any turning back to be possible. She must therefore be prepared to enlist the services of foreigners in providing what the foreigner wants, until at least such time as her own people are technically equipped. In doing this she will be extremely unwise if she tries to play off one foreigner against another or uses her patronage to reduce legitimate British influence. She must also give hospitality to foreigners and see that they have no legitimate ground for complaint. A grim experience has taught her that either disorder or insolvency inevitably brings foreign intervention and nothing can relieve her of this liability. Egyptians are naturally

sensitive about anything that seems to question their competence in these matters, but they must, I think, remember that, if we guarantee their independence, we shall ultimately be held responsible by the other Powers for any failure on their part which affects foreign interests.

As between Egyptians and ourselves success depends on bearing these conditions in mind, but so acting as to keep them in the background. Egypt always has required and still requires a special technique, if I may so speak, on the part of our representatives. I have described Lord Cromer's method—that of the "Agent-General," who governed the country while scrupulously respecting the forms of Egyptian autonomy. The problem is now changed and the Egyptians have not only the forms but the reality of self-government. Nevertheless, the Cromer method remains the secret of legitimate British influence in Egypt. The British representative, now described as High Commissioner, stands in a delicate position between the Egyptian King and Egyptian Ministers and Parliament. It is almost as difficult to define his position in legal terms as it was in former days to define that of Lord Cromer. Events have already thrown on him the duty of interpreting the Constitution, and if we call him *amicus curiæ* between the different Egyptian parties, we shall get the best idea of his duties outside his functions as guardian of British interests. To be effective this rôle must be played quietly and persuasively, and all parade of power which seems to conflict with Egyptian independence must be avoided.

Egyptians, bar a few irreconcilables, are perfectly well aware that they need our aid and advice, but they should be led to seek it voluntarily and not have it forced on them to the derogation, as they will think,

of the authority which we profess to have conceded to them. Further, it is inherent in this concession, supposing it to be sincere, that they should be permitted to choose their own leaders, make their own mistakes and correct them, if they can, in their own way. It is useless for us to say that we grant them independence but stipulate that they shall not choose certain parties or certain leaders. The test case of this is Zaghlul. He is, I know, a difficult man to deal with, and there is always a possibility that we shall come into collision with him or that he will create a deadlock by his attitude on the reserved questions. Our views on these subjects are perfectly well known, and it should be left to him to say whether he will take office with a full knowledge of them and risk the consequences, or whether he will stand aside and let another leader try his hand. What we should not do is to place him on a black-list or let it be supposed that his exclusion from office is an object of our policy. By alternately banishing and recalling him we have immensely contributed to making him the national hero that he is ; and, even when I was in Egypt this year, the idea that we intended to boycott him was greatly contributing to his popularity. Zaghlul's ascendancy in Egypt is very much what Gandhi's was in India some four or five years ago, an emotional something attaching to his personality which he is anxious to keep and is yet unable to turn to account in practical affairs. At times, I fancy, it is as embarrassing to him as it is undoubtedly to other politicians in Egypt, but we can do nothing to abate it and must be careful to avoid any action which unnecessarily inflames it.

Having known Zaghlul for many years and seen him in all moods, I am not ashamed to say that I entertain a very friendly feeling for him. He is humorous and

kindly and greatly beloved by his friends and intimates. Whatever he may be in public, he is certainly not an anti-British fanatic in sentiment or temperament, and he often speaks with pleasure of the old days when he worked amicably with British friends and colleagues. I cannot help hoping still that his stormy career may have a peaceful ending, but his misfortune, so far, is that he has been unable to effect the difficult transition from agitator to statesman. He therefore runs the risk of being the prisoner of the public opinion which he himself has created, but which it now needs the statesman's touch to convert to practical ends.

The important point for us, meanwhile, is that we should put an end to vacillation and definitely make up our minds that there is no half-way house between imposing our government on Egypt by force and frankly conceding Egyptian self-government, subject to the necessary conditions. My own belief is that the former alternative would be a costly, invidious and unnecessary assertion of power which we do right to decline, but let us beware lest we appear half-hearted or insincere in adopting the latter, or still worse, seem to be waiting on an expected failure for an excuse to withdraw it. As things are, it is wholly in our interests that this experiment should succeed, and whatever we can do negatively or positively to make it a success should be done ungrudgingly.

3

A few words may be added about the internal problem which now faces Egyptian Governments. The British did great work for the fellahin in the early years of the Occupation, but in the later years they found themselves blocked either by lack of funds or by the fear which

an alien Government instinctively feels, of encountering religious or racial prejudices in its attempts to reform. Prevented by the Capitulations from taxing the foreigner beyond a very limited amount, they did not venture to tax the Egyptians on a higher scale. All the proceedings of government had, therefore, to be adjusted to a fixed quantity of revenue, and even urgent reforms postponed or cut to the minimum for fear of exceeding it. The result is that in this very rich country education has made little progress, sanitary and medical services are on a very low level, and housing conditions are tolerated which are bad even when measured by Eastern standards. In travelling about Egypt—and I have been in many parts which the ordinary traveller seldom visits—I have been struck by the contrast between the elaborate and well-ordered life of the well-to-do Egyptians in the towns and the exceedingly primitive conditions in which a large number of the fellahin are content to live. This is not necessarily a contrast between wealth and poverty, for the fellah is often exceedingly prosperous; it is more a contrast between two ways of life which one is perpetually surprised to see existing side by side with each other, and which, so far as I know, are not to be found existing together to the same degree in any other Eastern country.

Part of this is due to the climate of Egypt. Except in the Delta or on its fringes, the country is practically rainless and almost any structure is sufficient for shelter. In India the peasant must at least build against the monsoon; in the greater part of Egypt he needs no protection except against the sun and occasional cold winds. This makes him careless about his home. I have heard it said at Luxor that if there were any prolonged rain, most of the surrounding villages would

melt like chocolate. A storm threatened once when I was there, and for an hour or two there was widespread alarm. There are undoubtedly advantages in this climate, but it has the considerable drawback of encouraging a primitive way of life with a low level of health and much liability to disease.¹ The annual Nile-flood helps to cleanse the country, but it is not a substitute for sanitary services or well-built houses in the villages.

Again, it must be said that in a considerable part of Egypt public security is at a low ebb. The fellahin are an attractive people and their children are fascinating. It is an unending pleasure to see them working together in the fields, or returning at nightfall with their mules and their camels and the children trotting in attendance or hoisted on the shoulders of their elders. Most of them seem to be light-hearted and merry, kindly to each other and very patient and industrious. But there is another side to their characters which is less to their credit. It was part of my duty in 1919 and 1920 to visit certain of the provincial centres of government and to inspect their crime records, and I was very unpleasantly surprised at the number and frequency of crimes of violence. It seemed to be taken as a matter of course that no one could build himself a house and settle down in the country without providing a band of retainers to protect it, and night patrols of mounted police were said to be a necessity almost everywhere. I remember commenting on this to a certain governor of a province

¹ The death-rate in Egypt, according to the last returns, was 26.1 per 1,000, compared with 12.5 per 1,000 in Great Britain. The birth-rate, on the contrary, was 43.7 per 1,000, compared with 22.7 per 1,000, in Great Britain. Infant mortality is about four times as heavy as in New York, and the disease known as bilharzia infects 65 per cent. of the people.

and being sharply answered that it was our fault. If we would leave it to him, he would stamp it out in six months, but we would not leave it to him, and we were incapable of doing it ourselves.

These are a few of the problems that await Egyptian Governments. In the meantime, let Egyptian politicians take care that in launching out into parliamentary Government they follow the better and not the worse European examples. Democracy in Europe is liable to its own corruptions and perversions, and Eastern men have to be warned that it will not work at all, if to these are added the crafts and subtleties and personal intrigues and vendettas that are sometimes associated with politics in the East.

One's affection for this country deepens with every visit to it, and if I dwell for a moment on its shortcomings it is only to show the limits of what we have done for Egypt and what remains for Egypt to do for herself. We have given Egypt great engineering works ; we have pulled her out of insolvency and saved her people from forced labour and the lash and other barbarous penalties, but we have not materially changed their way of life or civilized them according to our Western pattern. It may be argued that this is to their advantage and be taken as another proof of the tolerance with which the British Empire pursued its mission. But Egypt, as we hand it back to the Egyptians, affords a unique opportunity of discovering the middle way between the Eastern and Western methods of life, if it can be discovered. Its leaders and politicians are familiar with the West and live for the most part in the Western way ; they have or can get ample resources out of their own country ; and, by their closer contact with their own people, they should be able to do a great many things which we have left undone.

CHAPTER V

TUTANKHAMEN AND TOURISTS

The Cloud of Tourists—A Great Advertisement—The Tutankhamen Objects—The Golden Coffin and Mask—The Problem of Conservation—A Test Case.

I

SO far, I have dealt only with politics, but all the circumstances conspire to tangle Egypt up with the foreigner, to compel her to make money out of him, to cater for his goodwill, to minister to his pleasures, and to that extent to be dependent on him. Not only in these days does Israel go down into Egypt, but all the other tribes assemble there. When I was in Cairo in January of this year, clouds of tourists were descending on the country. They were coming in shiploads, four or five hundred at a time, crowding out the hotels, thronging the bazaars, buying indiscriminately, and making Paradise for the dragomen. Americans were, of course, the great majority, but English, German, Italians, French and Scandinavians were also of the company. This, I was told, was only a beginning. In the following year double the number were expected, and already most of the berths in world-touring steamers, and a large number of the rooms in the hotels, were booked for 1927. One optimist predicted that within seven years there would be daily services of airships

and aeroplanes which would bring week-end tourists by the thousand from all the capitals of Europe.

Tutankhamen has done it or a large part of it. The enormous advertisement which Egypt has had through and since the opening of the famous tomb in the Valley of the Kings has set all the world talking about her. There are great and beautiful things all over the world which intelligent people would equally wish to see, but for ordinary folk the Tutankhamen remains have a lure which few or none of the others possess. They are not battered relics of antiquity, but things new and bright coming straight from the three thousand-year-old tomb, as if they had been deposited there yesterday. This, from an artistic point of view, ought, I suppose, to be counted a fictitious advantage appealing only to vulgar minds. Yet I defy anyone of ordinary susceptibilities not to feel a certain awe and wonder as he looks at the belongings, precisely as they saw and handled them, of men and women who lived before Moses and Agamemnon, and when Greece and Rome and the Christian era were undreamt of. It is only Egypt that can show these things, and, through the interest which has been aroused in them, it is gradually being brought home to the rest of the world that the whole country is an incomparable museum of human origins in which all civilized peoples have an interest.

The glories of Tutankhamen have certainly not been exaggerated. After seeing them I am even tempted to say that the half has not been told. No verbal descriptions or photographs can do justice to the miracles of art and craft that are now on view in the Cairo museum. Whether for broad effects covering large spaces, or for minute intricacies of the jeweller's and enameller's art requiring a magnifying glass to reveal their beauties,

these objects are unsurpassable. The great gold coffin and "mask" of Tutankhamen, which were brought down to Cairo at the beginning of January, are the climax of the collection, and literally they leave one breathless. The modelling of the coffin, showing faintly the outline of the figure, is fascinating to the eye, and the engraved work on it a miracle of beauty. The two figures with outstretched arms and wings which form a frame to the central inscription¹ are a triumph of solemn design in perfect harmony with the simple and serene lines of the face at the head of the coffin. And now if one turns to the "mask," which is in fact a life-size bust in beaten gold with lines of blue enamel on the eyebrows and the head-dress, one sees the boy king in life and with the same compelling charm that arrests one in all his portraits. This bust will probably rank as the supreme masterpiece of the period. The thing aimed at is perfectly accomplished; the mastery of the difficult material is complete; there is a real emotion gravely restrained which subdues its glitter and colour and somehow communicates an infinite regret. Under it might have been written: "*Si qua fata aspera rumpas, tu Marcellus eris.*"²

¹ "O, Mother Mut (Goddess of the Sky) stretch thy wings over me as do the imperishable stars."

² Where there is a healthy rivalry between archæologists, Englishmen may take a modest pride in the fact that the discovery and conservation of all these objects stand to the credit of their countrymen. Early in 1920 I saw Mr. Howard Carter digging patiently round the inner circle of the Tombs of the Kings and removing tons of rubbish with apparently no result. Again and again in those days I was told that he was engaged in a hopeless quest on an exhausted site. To Mr. Howard Carter belongs the chief credit not only for the discovery of these objects, but for their disentanglement without damage from the coagulated mass of

The anthropological interest is enormous. The collection of walking-sticks with the figures of captives on their handles is in itself a whole portrait gallery of contemporary types wrought with such exquisite skill and realism that you seem to see the actual living men before you. One, probably an Assyrian, looks like an evangelical clergyman of the nineteenth century and he is ignominiously tied up with a Nubian negro, as if to give a hint of the reverse side of the culture of ancient Egypt. Seeing all these objects together sets one speculating on the culture and the general mode of life that they imply. It is certain that these beautiful thrones, chairs, beds, chariots, alabaster vases, linen chests, statuettes and other artistic treasures were in surroundings to match, and one sees in imagination the sumptuous palace from which they were taken.

But the Tutankhamen objects, though the latest and the best advertised, are only a small part of the treasures of Egypt. The Cairo museum is overflowing with beautiful and wonderful things to be seen nowhere else in the world; the country is sown with tombs and temples and half-explored sites, any one of which may produce wonders equal to those of the Tutankhamen tomb. Under the new impulse given to Egyptology, all the principal universities in the world and societies and schools of archæology are raising funds and seeking concessions to dig in Egypt. And presently, artists, and art critics will come to Egypt, as they ought

unguents and libations in which they were involved. This has been a work of infinite patience and skill for which the Museum authorities owe a deep debt of gratitude to Mr. Carter and those who have worked with him. The collection will be added to month by month as fresh objects are taken out and classified. But enough is on view to show its incomparable quality.

to have done long ago, and make a serious attempt to appraise her contribution to the art of the world. The idea that Egyptian art was a conventional thing of stale repetitions without interest to the historians of art could never have survived any serious examination of the low-relief sculpture of the tombs, but it becomes sheer nonsense in view of the proofs now coming to light of the great artistic period which followed the reforms of Aknathen and lasted on into the period of reaction. Egypt is ripe for a Ruskin to write about her "Stones" and in the next few years, unless I am much mistaken, a great many Ruskins of different nationalities will be in the field.

Now, though they are slow to realize it, this is a matter of very real importance to Egyptian Ministers and politicians. Egypt will be very much in the limelight in the next few years, and the combined opinion of tourists and men of learning spreading their reports throughout Europe and America will have very seriously to be reckoned with. If it can plausibly be said that the Egyptian Government is blind to the value of the treasures of which it is the guardian and trustee, or that it is omitting to take proper precautions to house them and conserve them, very damaging inferences will be drawn. The Milner Report proposed that the Department of Antiquities should remain under European direction and it issued a memorandum on the affairs of this department which, I think, is still worthy of consideration. In this memorandum it was stated that the Cairo museum was greatly under-staffed and inadequately equipped, and recommendations were made both to increase the staff and to improve the relations between the Government and private excavators. There has, I understand, been some improvement in staffing since

this memorandum was issued, but, on the other hand the new finds have so accumulated as to swamp the museum and to prove it wholly inadequate either to house what it has got or to provide for the future.

It was in these circumstances that Mr. Rockefeller came forward with his munificent offer to provide two millions sterling for a new museum. That has been declined for reasons about which I am not competent to express an opinion. But the rejection of this offer, for good reasons or bad, does but make the question more urgent. The housing of unique but extremely perishable objects is not a matter which will wait indefinitely. The main purpose of bringing them out of tombs into which light and air have penetrated is that they may be as carefully sheltered and protected as in their former resting-place, and for this a suitable museum and a sufficient staff of expert curators to handle them expeditiously are necessities. If, therefore, the Egyptian Government is unwilling to accept foreign endowments, it must do these things for itself, and do them with as little delay as possible. Nothing, I am sure, would be more acceptable to archæologists than to see an Egyptian Government taking a lively interest in the antiquities, and recognizing that they are among the greatest assets of the country. But in this as in a great many other matters Egyptians must realize that foreign aid, in some form or other, is indispensable. Egyptology is a highly specialized science which has been developed by the joint labours of French, British, American, German and Italian students. It is no reproach to Egyptians that they have not hitherto had the opportunity of equipping themselves in this science, but it would be a reproach to them if in assuming

responsibility they rejected the proffered aid of those who are equipped.

The tourists can look after themselves, but even from their point of view it might be wise to spend a little money on beautifying the sites and the approaches to them. Ancient Egyptian buildings, as Professor Breasted has reminded us, did not everywhere rise out of sombre heaps of rubbish as they mostly do to-day, and as a mere financial investment it might be found profitable to lay out parks to surround monuments not situated in the desert, and even in the desert to provide parked approaches with avenues of trees. But all these embellishments must be postponed until the essentials are provided, and in the meantime Egyptian Governments will, I hope, remember that a quite considerable number of Europeans in all countries regard this provision as a test case. No one grudges Egypt the handsome revenue that she is getting from her tourists, but she is expected in return to see that the objects which attract them are properly cared for, and if she can do it in no other way, she had far better tax the tourists to procure the necessary funds.

PART THREE
INDIA

CHAPTER VI

INDIA REVISITED

First Impressions—Changes in Bombay—Across India—The Sense of Population—Calcutta—A Blend of East and West—Bengali and British—The Bazaar Slums—Efforts at Improvement—A Charming City—Politics and Agitation—Co-operation on the Way.

I

LANDING again in India after a period of absence I got the impression which, I hope, is not an illusion, of very marked material progress—at all events in the cities. In Bombay I was struck by the clearances, and the large number of new buildings which give the place a cleaner, airier and more spacious appearance than on my previous visit. There is, of course, still the vast hinterland of squalid houses and tenements where the Indian population swarms in its scores of thousands, and no Englishman who remembers that this city is mainly a British creation can look upon that part of it with any pride. But in Bombay as in all the greater cities of India the Europeanizing process goes on apace, and is aided and abetted by the more prosperous Indians, who in this respect at all events, are deaf to the exhortations of politicians urging them to go back to the Indian ways. Here, in fact, on the very threshold, one sees the same conflict as in Egypt and Turkey between the Eastern man's desire to be Eastern

and the apparently irresistible tide of circumstance and self-interest which compels him to assimilate himself to the West, as soon as he sets out to make money and enjoy what are supposed to be the good things of this world.

A charming old American gentleman who had struck the East for the first time in Egypt, told me that he thought it "dreadfully untidy." Indeed, so appalled was he with the dust and litter of the bazaars in Cairo that he cut short his stay there by a week and came post-haste on to India in the hope of finding something neater and cleaner. I tremble to think of his feelings when he gets to Benares, but I met him the day after he had landed in Bombay, and he told me he was delighted. He found himself entirely at home in the large clean streets in the centre of the town and liked the sky-scraping uppishness of the new seven-storied blocks with their deep verandas. One may not share this taste, but Bombay with its magnificent sea-front and view across the bay is truly a delightful city, and I know of no place in the world where I would rather take tea on a winter afternoon when the sun is setting, than the garden of its Yacht Club, which sweeps this prospect. I have a memory of another spot on top of Malabar Hill, just where it breaks down to the sea, which I have always thought of as the ideal site for a summer bungalow. In such places one is out of the dust and litter of the East, and though the climate is that of an orchid-house, this too, is not intolerable, provided one has nothing to do.

But this is not India, and most people in this country have something to do. Take the train to Calcutta in the afternoon and keep your eyes open and you will begin to see India. The first part of the journey is

charming. You go for some hours by shining waters, with rocky mountains rising like Dolomites on your right, and then pass into a richly-wooded country where in mid-winter all the leaves are on the trees and glow with what seem to be autumnal colours. When you wake in the morning you are out on the great central plain of India, and for the next thirty hours you will be travelling along it with scarcely a hill or a knoll to right or left the whole way. As landscape it has a peculiar charm. The trees are large and of great variety, and their deep greens are beautifully relieved against the pale brown background. Palms, bananas and sugarcane give the tropical touch. Every inch of ground seems to be cultivated somehow, and large spaces are covered with the square compartments of the paddy-fields, in which the rice is coming up. There are quantities of birds—storks, cranes, kites, vultures and innumerable crows, and many others, smaller and larger, flashing all colours in the sunlight.

The dominant impressions are of enormous distances and swarming population. No other country that I have travelled in gives you the same sense of population as India. I have lately journeyed hundreds of miles across the plateau of Asia Minor, and for miles together scarcely seen a human being or a human habitation. Similarly, in large spaces of the United States and Canada you go for scores of miles without seeing a living being or a house. In India—at least in the plains—you cannot look out of a railway carriage window anywhere without seeing people. In the day you see them working in the fields—men, women and children together; in the evening setting towards the villages in single file with the bullock-carts accompanying. About every two miles there is a village, generally a close-packed group

of mud houses with thatched or corrugated iron roofs, and a pleasant greenery about it. Near the villages are large tanks or ponds with—generally—half a dozen bathers splashing about in them, and to all appearance enjoying themselves hugely. All the children seem to be able to swim, and they shout lustily and wave to the train as it passes.

Every railway station, even the smallest, is thronged with people, vivid, voluble people, who keep up an endless chatter. You might suppose a riot on foot, but they are merely discussing their family affairs in their normal tones of voice. It is a perennial puzzle to you what these people are doing, and why so many more of them wish to travel in railway trains than the peoples of other countries. One explanation of the crowds is that they go hours—sometimes a whole day—before their train comes in, and entire families may thus be seen camping on the platform and patiently taking their meals until it arrives. Anyhow, these stations with their throngs of people are a fascinating sight; Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like some of these, for they have come in their best and their garments are of orange and rose-colour and bright blues and deep reds, all flaming and glittering in the sun.

It takes you two nights and a day to cross India, and all along the road there is nothing that a European would call a town. There are enlarged villages with a score of substantial buildings in the centre of them, and at long intervals there are military stations, with big bungalows for the officers and their families scattered about them, but there is nothing remotely resembling Bombay or Calcutta even on the smallest scale. The first thing you have to grasp is that this and *not* Bombay or Calcutta, is India. The two great cities and ports

are European peep-holes from this vast and populous interior, and except possibly Madras and Rangoon, there are no other cities in India at all like them.

2

Calcutta has lost its place of pride as the capital city and even now it has not quite forgotten that injury. But it is still so much the centre of India and so uniquely typical of its varied life that one cannot for a moment think of it as provincial. You find in it, as you find in London, the nucleus and centre of most of the movements which spread outwards into the provinces. It is a splendid example of British-Indian co-operation, being in effect neither British nor Indian, but a blend of the two which to my eye is extremely pleasing and original. It has something of the gaiety of a southern European capital with the solidity and orderliness of a well-governed English city. The Bengali quickens its mental life and the English give it ballast. In Calcutta you find yourself in a mentally alert, highly cultivated society, with as many eminent men, both Indian and European, among its members as may be found in any city of its size in the world. It has universities, learned societies, and newspapers that would hold their own with the best English.¹

In winter its climate is delightful, and in summer, not intolerable. To walk about it is an unending pleasure for it opens its arms to all the tribes, and they throng its streets in the many-coloured garments of their clans. Waharis from Rajputana do a considerable part of its

¹ As a former editor of the *Westminster Gazette*, I may perhaps say that it was a special pleasure to see an old colleague, A. H. Watson, in charge of *The Statesman* and rapidly making his mark as a leader of opinion.

trade, Sikhs drive its taxis (some very badly), Kabulis sell its fruit. As you look close, you discover that Europeans are a very small minority of its million or more of inhabitants. Twice for the sake of curiosity I counted the number of European faces that I saw in the quarter of a mile of broad thronged pavement between the Maidan and the far end of Dalhousie Square. On the first occasion there were six, on the second, nine. This proportion—or disproportion—is an elementary fact about all India which, whatever deductions may be drawn from it, can never be forgotten.

Like Bombay (and like European capitals) Calcutta has a periphery of the densely crowded slums which in the East are called bazaars, but have their inhabitants thick-packed in the tenements which rise above and behind the little shops on the ground floors. A friend who applies Western standards to Eastern things tells me that she has been round the Burra Bazaar towards midnight, and been shocked by the number of people she saw sleeping in the streets. So painfully did this affect her that she shudders when she thinks of Calcutta. I have so often when I have been in Calcutta wished that I too might sleep in the open that I cannot enter into these feelings. In the East quite prosperous people lie about anywhere at night-time, and would be greatly surprised if exception were taken to their doing so. Calcutta of course has its very serious poverty problem, but there are very few cities where one can see a more vigorous effort to clear out slums, broaden streets, and provide decent dwellings than is being made by its famous Improvement Trust, to say nothing of the work of its municipality. At the present time one can walk hardly anywhere in its poorer quarters without being cheered by the signs of this activity.

In any case it is a delightful place for the mere visitor. With its great open spaces, official residences, and public buildings, it has all the airs of a metropolis, and the abundance of its trees and gardens adds something of the charm of a garden city. I know of no more beautiful vista than that down which you look in a perfectly straight line from the Victoria Memorial through the Maidan to the Scottish Church at the far end of the Dalhousie Square. The reader may note that in contemplating this prospect, I turn my back on the famous new building which is the joint memorial of the Great Queen and Lord Curzon, and this helps me to shirk a judgment which is better left to experts in its chosen style. Somehow one has the impulse after looking at this glittering structure, to dive into the streets behind the Chowringee, and pick out the remnants of the old colonial houses, where the nabobs and officials of a former period lived surrounded by gardens that have now unhappily got absorbed into the modern streets. Many of these are architecturally interesting, and most have a quiet sobriety which conveys something of the atmosphere of the old days in India.

3

Calcutta seethes with politics, and is the centre of agitations which sometimes take ugly and dangerous forms. Its Hindus and Mohamedans behave to each other much as Protestants and Catholics did in the former days in Belfast and provide the same problem for the police and for peaceful citizens who are liable to be caught up in their encounters. Yet in normal times, it would be difficult to find a mixed community more apparently at peace with itself. The hospitality is on the American scale. Indian and European alike welcome

the stray Englishman, draw him into their circles, talk to him frankly of their problems and interests, lure him into speaking at their associations and conferences until he is ashamed of seeing his name in the newspapers. He passes from one to the other, and finds them all friendly and on friendly terms with each other. Superficially there is a great deal of clatter about whether the thing called "dyarchy" has succeeded or disastrously failed, and about what the Swarajists will do next and whether they will co-operate, or "non-co-operate," and the almost undiscoverable terms on which they will do the one or the other. But inwardly there is peace and good humour and so much coming and going between the two camps that, in spite of everything, one becomes convinced that "co-operation" is on the way.

This is the great change that I observe in India after fourteen years. Fourteen years ago I received serious remonstrances from English friends for the freedom with which I entered into Indian circles, and was gravely warned of the danger of encouraging "seditionists." Now I was encouraged to go everywhere and to see and talk to as many of the extremist politicians as were willing to see and talk to me. Then there was a hard tone about everything that was called "reform," and the line was drawn firmly against "agitators." Now there is a real desire to understand what Indians want and to meet them more than half-way, if it is possible. One sees the difference most conspicuously in the English Press, which, with rare exceptions, gives the Indian politician the same courtesy and consideration as it gives the British official, and not infrequently takes his side, where it formerly would have dismissed him as an impertinent intruder. This, I think, truly reflects the general attitude. The most sympathetic account I had

of the Indian extremists came from a high official, who considered it his duty to keep a considerable number of them in gaol.

The Indian mind moves more slowly. It has old-standing grievances—social and personal even more than political—which are stored up from past times and not easily cast off. Indian Nationalists are still in the mood which regards any public appearance of fraternizing as likely to weaken the fighting line and lower the leaders in the eyes of the rank and file. Yet the seemingly incompatible elements are all the time breaking and fusing below the surface. Talking to politicians I got a strong impression that they were feeling about for ways by which they could “co-operate” without losing caste with the stalwarts of their party. There is an enormous interest in constitutional forms and a belief in their potency which a disillusioned European may think superstitious. But there is also an almost pathetic desire to learn, which I think, may be turned to good account.

Such were the first impressions which I gained from a visit to Calcutta in February, 1926. After visiting other parts of India I am tempted to say that they were typical of the mood of all India at this time.

CHAPTER VII

DARJEELING—AN INTERLUDE

The Great Panorama—A Darjeeling Myth—The American Lightning Tourist—His Achievements and Privations—The Mongolian Fringe—Many Tribes—Tea-Planting—The Official Hill Station.

THE last chapter was written at a window in Darjeeling, with the stupendous panorama of the mountains spread out in front of me. It was distracting to the thoughts and an unending marvel to the eye. The Kinchinjunga range swims in air at an incredible height, cut off by a broad band of diaphanous mist from the lower ranges below the snow-line, which themselves run up to 17,000 feet. The snows are pink against a saffron sky, and the shadows pale violet. These mountains have all moods; at dawn they are glimmering phantoms, at midday they show every detail of glacier, moraine, and snowfield with crystalline clearness; at sunset they play high jinks with all the colours of the rainbow. At other times the clouds come up and they vanish out of sight for days together. Kinchinjunga is forty-five miles away, as the crow flies, but you have to be at a respectful distance to see a mountain which is more than 28,000 feet high, and in this atmosphere all distances are halved.

The popular belief is that you come to Darjeeling to see Mount Everest, but that is mostly a myth. If you get up

at three in the morning and go seven miles in the dark to the top of Tiger Hill, you *may* see the sun strike a little white finger in the far distance. This, the guide will tell you, is the top of Everest shooting up one hundred and twenty-six miles away above the other mountains. And then you go away and for the rest of your life you say that you have seen the sun rise on Mount Everest. On the other hand, you may not see anything, and two of the four parties which went up during the ten days I was at Darjeeling did nothing but stand shivering in the mist and then return dolefully to the hotel. It is at the best a detestable expedition for the elderly. You have the choice of walking in the dark up a steep mountain path or being carried by six Tibetan porters in a thing called a "dandy." I hate walking in the dark on steep mountain paths, and I dislike being carried about by Tibetans. Without any of these trials one can be out in the morning on the hill-tops and see all the splendours of sunrise on the great mountains. So I have not been to Tiger Hill, and for the rest of my life shall be able to maintain that I have *not* seen the sun rise on Mount Everest.

I said this to an American, who was deeply shocked. He himself had come three hundred and eighty-six miles from Calcutta for this purpose and no other. He arrived at half-past four in the afternoon, having travelled all night; ran about the town till sunset; discoursed with me about religion for an hour before dinner (and wanted to go on again after dinner); got up at three, was carried to Tiger Hill, saw "the sun rise on Mount Everest"; heaved an enormous sigh of relief, and took the half-past eight train in the morning back to Calcutta. Kinchinjunga, being eight hundred feet lower, was nothing to him, and he barely shot a glance at it, though it stood

revealed in its whole height and depth, shining with its accompanying peaks in the morning sun.

India, during the winter season is full of Americans, not "globe trotting," but doing "lightning tours," and Tiger Hill has a fatal fascination for them. Later in the day an American lady stopped me in the hotel corridor and asked me if I thought it was her duty to go. She was well over sixty, and was travelling with a husband of seventy, who had caught a severe cold coming up from the plains and was nursing himself in his room for the 3 a.m. ordeal. It was a heartrending case. They had come all the way from Minnesota to see Mount Everest; to miss it would be terrible, yet it might be the death of him and her. I begged her not to think of it, but to no avail. At 4 a.m. this old couple went off together, carried by the Tibetan porters—and the dawn came in mist and rain, and they saw nothing and returned wet and frozen, to be whirled off to the next stage of the "lightning tour." They had companions in their misfortune, for eighty other Americans went with them and shared the same fate. None of them stayed more than twenty-four hours in this place, and for the whole of that time the mountains were invisible.

This new kind of lightning tourist has turned the old-fashioned globe-trotter, who used to be an object of derision to all residents and experts, into a quite respectable figure. Beside the new-comers, he is a serious and leisurely scientific traveller. Yet as one of the old kind, I find myself wishing that something—I have not the least notion what—might be done to ease the lot of these passionate pilgrims. Their invasion of India is less portentous than their descent upon Egypt, for the country is vast and tolerant and absorbs them with

the resignation with which it accepts most passing things. Yet what do they get to compensate for the amazing feats of endurance which they perform—the three nights in the train to one in a bed, the up-at-all-hours to see sights which are often invisible, the alternate joltings on camels, mules, elephants, donkeys, suffered by elderly and portly people who have never before sat on any animal, the mass food which is part of the mass tour, the interminable toleration of each other's society, the endless packing and unpacking? What happens to any of them, if they fall sick or fail to catch train or steamer at the imperative scheduled time? I have inquired, but only to be told severely that these things do not happen to Americans. Such is their keenness, determination and strength of will, that though they may die they never fall out, when once embarked on the lightning mass tour. With remorseless conscientiousness they fulfil every item in a programme laid down in New York or Chicago which enables them to see all India in three weeks, and then start cheerfully for China, Japan and the Pacific Islands, in each of which countries the same performance is repeated.

One sees them with notebooks in which the things—which-simply-must-be-seen have been carefully written down, and these are methodically ticked off as they are disposed of. The time allowed is often little more than permits of this mechanical effort, and many of the note-takers seem to be bent on establishing speed-records. A time-table I saw for a party at Agra comprised a visit to the Taj for one hour in the morning, followed by a drive to the deserted city of Fatehpur Sikri (22 miles) for lunch, a quick return with a flying visit to the tomb of Akbar at Sekundra, and a final hour at the Agra Fort before catching the late afternoon train to Delhi.

One wonders in what frame of mind these travellers leave the country and what report of it they take back to their own country. This is a matter of some importance to us, and may be more and more so as their numbers increase. I have talked to some of them and they seemed to take severe views about coloured people and our "misplaced leniency" towards them, but the minds of most of them were too choked with the piled up impressions of their breathless journey to have room for thoughts about the people of India and their history and the ways in which they are governed.

This, however, is a digression from which I must return. Mountains apart, Darjeeling is worth more than a lightning visit. It gives you the same sense of the variety of India as a visit to the North-West Frontier. Just as when you go to Peshawur you seem suddenly to have come out of India into Central Asia, so in coming to Darjeeling, you seem to have come suddenly into Mongolia. The long profiles and the sharply-cut features of the Bengali give place to broad, flat faces with slanting eyes, snub noses and high cheek-bones. Chinese shops and Chinamen abound, and you seem to be almost on speaking terms with China, which less than forty years ago claimed suzerainty over Sikkim, of which Darjeeling is a British-governed enclave. Northward you look into Tibet and Bhutan and westward into Nepal. There never was such a gathering of the tribes as come on a Sunday into the bazaar or such a fascinating variety of costumes. Lepchas, Limbus, Bhutias from Tibet, Bhutias from Sikkim, Bodos, Dhimals are all mixed up together in an incessantly laughing and chattering crowd. The Lepcha dress, with its red and white cotton robe and ornamental girdle, is charmingly contrived, but the women's habit of attaching round disks of silver and

turquoise to their noses is a thing you must get used to before you can think it an addition to beauty.

They seem to be a light-hearted people, and are for ever joking and laughing among themselves. They gamble incessantly, and at almost every turn of the road you see parties squatting on the ground and doing something with cards and dice which causes little piles of pice to change hands with amazing rapidity. The children—except that their skins are a rich brown—are Japanese dolls come to life, and their dress is an exact reproduction in miniature of that of their elders. This gives them a deceptively sedate appearance, for they are jolly little people who romp and sprawl all over the place without correction from their parents. Ethnologists have written learnedly about the manners and customs of these tribes, and they seem to cover all the possibilities of human conduct. Polygamy seems to be practised in one mountain valley and polyandry in another. In one the woman rules the roost and beats the man, in another she is a chattel and a beast of burden. For religion they practise a corrupt form of Buddhism; and Buddhist temples, some of which are ancient and interesting, are dotted about the hills and valleys. My American friend, the lightning traveller, was a fundamentalist from the far West, and he was greatly concerned for the spiritual welfare of these people, about whom he had heard very disquieting reports. He asked me with much earnestness how soon I thought the three hundred millions of “Indian heathens” would be converted to Christianity, and when I said not in my lifetime or his, he seemed to be discouraged. But he admitted that the people hereabouts would be late-comers into the fold. (The actual words he used were that “they would be a stiff part of the proposition.”)

The chief industry round about Darjeeling is tea-planting, and it looks extraordinarily prosperous. The tea plantations run in terraces down the steep hill-sides, like vines in the Apennines, and the big white bungalows of the planters shine out against the dark forests behind them. At night one can see their lights twinkling in the valleys below, giving a pleasant sense of homeliness in these solitudes. Tea-planting seems to be an agreeable occupation, and the planter who is a sportsman may find bears at his own altitude, and has only to go down a few thousand feet for tigers and leopards. The scenery is perhaps a little too sensational to live with permanently, but the tropical forests at the lower levels are miracles of beauty, and there are amazing flowers and blossom at most seasons. Even at Darjeeling itself the magnolia trees were in full flower at the 7,000 foot level on the first of February.

Darjeeling is finally the hill-station of the Bengal Government, and for three months from the beginning of March onwards it is thronged with British officials and their wives and alive with their gaieties. When the rains come in June, back they all go to Calcutta, but there could be no more delectable spot on earth in spring and early summer. If ever a lowly ambition could be spurred to the soaring height of an Indian Governorship, it would be on seeing the summer residences of these potentates. Here the Residency stands in a lovely park of cryptomeria and rhododendrons, and looks across an immense wooded valley to the great mountains.

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CHAPTER VIII

POLITICS IN INDIA

Gandhi's Idea—Its Breakdown—The Reaction from Gandhism—The Swarajist Attitude and its Results—Lord Reading's Viceroyalty—Revival of Hindu and Mohamedan Animosities—Dyarchy—Transferred and Reserved Subjects—Collective and Divided Responsibility—Untoward Circumstances—The Year 1929—"Responsive Co-operation" and Constitutional Advance.

I

IT would be useless to deal in detail with the complicated and ever-changing phases of Indian party politics. But certain simple things have to be borne in mind by those who would understand the present position. India has been subject in the last seven years not only to agitation about its own affairs, but to the great wave of anti-Western feeling which swept over the East after the war. Gandhi's movement, with its comprehensive boycott of British-made institutions and European goods, combined the two things. On the one side it was an emotional and religious reaction against the West; on the other the expression of a fervent Indian patriotism, which necessarily took an anti-British form. Gandhi pointed to the collapse of the material civilization of the West and appealed to his countrymen to keep their souls in the Eastern faith, and, as a means to that end, to withdraw from all connivance at or parti-

cipation in British rule. Gandhi is a Tolstoyan pacifist to whom all violence is abhorrent, and he seems to have conceived the idea of a silent and simultaneous movement which would have left the Government without officials, but also without function or purpose, and at the same time have enabled India to support herself and to dispense with the foreign trader. This he considered to be the proper and dignified reply of the Indian people to the crude and wounding violence of the Western method in its culminating manifestation at Amritsar.

The idea was chimerical; in practice it would have been a general strike which would rapidly have produced anarchy and bloodshed calling for the forcible assertion of authority in the interests of Indians quite as much as Europeans. Where it had a partial success it had this result, much to Gandhi's dismay, and it is surmised that he was not greatly aggrieved when he was removed from the scene by being put into prison. But Gandhi was, and may be again, a great power in India, and the endeavours of the Swaraj, or Home Rule party, first to work with him, then to moderate his ideas, and finally to escape from his control without incurring the odium of breaking with him, have been the outstanding features of Indian party politics in the last four years. It would be tedious to enter into details, but summarily it may be said that the Swarajist policy of entering the Assembly and Councils established under the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms, and operating from within, prevailed at least for a time over Gandhi's idea of refusing to join them, and in the last stage Gandhi has gone into retirement and abjured politics for a year.

But in the course of this controversy the Swarajists have thought it necessary to protest that they differed from Gandhi not about the end in view, but only about

the method. They, too, wished to throw off the British-made Constitution, but they proposed to do it by entering the Councils, obstructing their business, and bringing it to a standstill, as the Irish did in the old days to the British Parliament. In two provinces, Bengal and the Central Provinces, they have either wholly or very largely succeeded in this aim, and the chief functions of the government have reverted to the Governor and his Executive. In Bengal the situation has been embittered by a criminal movement and the "Ordinance" which has been necessary to deal with it. Elsewhere—in the Punjab, Bombay, the United Provinces, Madras, Bihar and Orissa—the Swarajists have either failed altogether, or merely added a little to the difficulties of government. In the Central Legislature, which differs from the Councils in that the Executive is independent of it, the Swarajists, like other parties, played the part of a constitutional Opposition, until they "walked out" last March, and according to all accounts showed considerable ability in this rôle. They passed sundry resolutions against the Government, and made demonstrations against the British-made Constitution, but they also sat on Select Committees, and according to the official chronicler, "co-operated in the passage of useful legislation." This Assembly is a model of decorum; some British officials as well as Indian members have won their spurs as skilful debaters, and the general opinion at the beginning of this year was that it had surpassed expectations, and was doing a work of great value in educating politicians and forming public opinion.

I have omitted many details, but this, I think, is a fair account of the general course of events since the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms were instituted. Certainly it does not justify any sweeping condemnation of these reforms,

and still less any helpless pessimism about the future. I was told everywhere that there was a far better feeling than five years ago, and much of this was attributed to the wise and patient course which Lord Reading had steered and his steady refusal to be driven into sensational courses. One hears of all Viceroy's that they have a wavering mind; but so far as this was said of Lord Reading, it may be taken to mean that he refused to do certain things that die-hards and other impetuous people desired him to do, with the result that at the end of his term, his praise was in everybody's mouth, and his departure regretted not least by Indians who thought it their duty to oppose him. He had carried the country through a disturbed period with the minimum use of exceptional powers, and *vis-à-vis* the Constitution kept the even balance of a constitutional ruler, using his powers when necessary, but never, or hardly ever, when the case could be met by patience or persuasion.

To complete this summary it must be added that the last three years of this period have witnessed a revival of Hindu and Mohamedan animosities which threatens to cut across the lines of Nationalist politics. I have inquired in many quarters about the causes of this and have received many different and sometimes conflicting answers. Gandhi suggested that it was being fomented by the British for their own ends—which I believe to be profoundly untrue. The outbreaks between the two communities are a perpetual trouble to all the authorities responsible for law and order; one need only cite the horrors perpetuated by the Moplahs in Southern India to show the extreme forms that they may take. Officials retort upon Gandhi that he himself has a considerable

responsibility, in that he undermined the authority of the Civil Government by his non-co-operation movement and at the same time inflamed religious passion by identifying himself with the Caliphate agitators, and preaching the doctrine of "religion above all things."¹

This argument seems to me a little over-wrought. The rally of Hindus and Mohamedans in defence of the Caliphate belonged to the wave of anti-Western feeling which swept over the East after the war and was too artificial to last long in any case. It was shattered when the New Turkey contemptuously cast off the object of veneration, and so removed the mainspring of the agitation against British policy or what it was supposed to be. I do not say that pro-Turkish feeling would not revive in India as elsewhere in the East, if the European Allies were supposed to be trampling upon a defenceless Turkish people, but for the moment the pious Indian Moslem is disposed to think that Kemal Pasha deserves anything that he gets. The truer explanation is, I think, that the shock administered by the New Turkey has turned Indian Mohamedanism in upon itself. Deprived of its vent in external agitation it is concentrating upon its own position or what it might be, if India were dominated by Hindu Swarajists. It wants to be perfectly clear on that point before it goes on with a movement which may otherwise place it at the mercy of the numerically preponderant Hindus.

This in its turn accentuates Hindu feeling. There are provinces, like the Punjab, where the Mohamedans are in a majority and are regaining power and influence and throwing off Hindu ascendancy in the Councils and in the Administration. The complaints of the displaced Hindu spread from these regions to other parts of India ;

¹ "India in 1924-5," pp. 299-300.

the Hindu Maha Sabha takes up his cause and is replied to by the Mohamedan Tanzim. In the upper ranks the tension is political and racial, but it rapidly spreads to the temples and mosques, and fanatical mobs start "reprisals" which spread like fire. This, I should say, is a fair description of what was happening in India in the first half of 1926.

It is difficult for the English observer not to draw the moral in terms which lead Hindus to believe that he takes pleasure in these dissensions. That is not so. From the Viceroy down to the humblest collector, the whole Administration hates them and lives in a constant anxiety about the merciful way of dealing with them. But it would be folly—equally for British and Indians—not to recognize that they are a very real difficulty in the advance towards Indian self-government. Hindus and Mohamedans are not localized communities, which can be dealt with separately, or divided as Protestants and Catholics are in Ireland—at least provisionally—into north and south. Though the Hindus are in a majority of three to one, the Mohamedans are all over India, and with few exceptions are men of the same race whose creed is an accident of history. The Hindus, whose religious theory prevents them from being a proselytizing race, have lately thrown up the theory that the Indian Mohamedan is an "unreclaimed" Hindu and is therefore a proper object of "reclamation" (Shuddhi). To this the Mohamedans, who are avowedly a proselytizing people, have replied with the Tanzim movement, which aims at the conversion of Hindus. Both movements threaten further trouble. The Indian people must somehow compose this quarrel, or the provincial autonomy which they ask us to concede will leave them and us with an unsettled and almost insoluble problem of "oppressed minorities."

In the meantime, I cannot think it would be wise to abandon the "communal representation" which, so far as it goes, mitigates the clash and leaves each community free to choose its own representatives on the electoral bodies. Proportional representation, or some form of it, might effect the same object, but it would not tend to peace merely to mix the electorates and leave the minorities at the mercy of the majorities.

3

I must now plunge into what Plato would have called the "great wave" of Indian controversy. This is the formidable question of "Dyarchy." It sends the blood to the head in a tropical climate, and when men begin discussing whether it has failed or succeeded and who is to blame for what, it is time to leave the dinner-table. No Englishman will touch it until he has heard a tumult of opinions, and then he will walk fearfully. Let me confess that I personally have not a clean slate in this matter. I followed the Montagu Reforms from their earliest stages to their conclusion, and was a whole-hearted supporter of them on the material then available to an English journalist. It seemed to me that they were a good way of breaking new ground and that they offered a fair opportunity of training Indians in responsible government without losing continuity with the previous administration or imperilling the Central Government. That I still think to have been a reasonable opinion, but experience has brought new facts to light which it is important to digest before the next step is taken.

I must be content with general impressions and leave the reader who wants details to go to the report of Sir Alexander Muddiman's Committee, in which all sides of the controversy are set out in the Majority and Minority

Reports.¹ But first let me explain what the system called "Dyarchy" is.

Under that system the great provinces have been provided with elective Councils, but the subjects of administration are divided into two compartments, the first, called "reserved" subjects, being retained in the hands of the Governor and his nominated Executive; the second called "transferred" subjects, being passed over to Ministers who must be elected members of the Council, and are therefore, in the vast majority of cases, Indians. The two most important "reserved" subjects are law and order and the final control of finance, but the "transferred" include education, local self-government (the establishment and development of District Boards, Unions and Village Councils), medical administration and public health, excise, agriculture, fisheries, co-operation, etc.—all very important matters for the well-being of the local communities. The Governor is supposed to work equally with both sections of the Government, and he is at liberty to take his Indian Ministers into his confidence upon all branches of administration; and if he is wise, will do so with the least possible reserve. But these Ministers are in theory responsible to the electorate only for the "transferred" subjects, and they ought not in theory to be implicated in the doings of the Governor and his Council on the "reserved" subjects, however unpopular these may be with the electorate. This electorate consists of only 5 per cent. of the total population, but it is sufficiently intelligent and vocal to exert considerable influence, and Indian Ministers and members of Council appear to stand greatly in awe of it. In the last resort the Gover-

¹ A convenient summary of these Reports will be found in the Official Year-book, "India, 1924-5," pp. 57-63.

nor has certain powers of overriding the Legislature both by vetoing its legislation and legislating over its head, but these he is supposed to exercise only in extreme cases.

This system, as already recorded, has worked smoothly in Madras and the United Provinces, sufficiently well in several other provinces, and broken down altogether in Bengal and the Central Provinces, where exceptionally fierce politics or deeds of violence have involved the Executive in a struggle with the Swarajist or Nationalist party. I have already spoken of the Swarajist endeavour to produce a deadlock by its policy of non-co-operation, which places a veto on Indians serving as Ministers and enjoins obstruction on the elected members. This caused great strain and friction in the years 1923 and 1924, and though it appears to have been modified for the time being, there is always a danger of its being revived, if no bridge can be built between the Government and the Swarajist party. There are Englishmen who will tell you that this party is past reasoning with, and that its only object is to make government impossible with a view to throwing off the British yoke. If that were so, there would be nothing to do but to keep a firm front and refuse to budge an inch beyond the present reforms. But no one who has read the Muddiman Report, and still more no one who has tried with any patience to discuss the matter with the Swarajists will, I think, come to this conclusion. In any case there are not only Swarajists to be considered; there are also large numbers of independent Indians, including especially the members of the reconstituted Liberal Party, who desire to "co-operate" but have honest doubts about dyarchy and advance arguments which, *prima facie*, deserve very careful consideration.

For what these people allege to have happened in India

is exactly what would have happened in Great Britain, if we could imagine the dyarchical system to have been tried there. Wherever there is a keen interest in politics, the idea of collective responsibility asserts itself over the theory of divided responsibility. The Indian Minister who remains a member of a Government is held responsible by his electorate for all the acts of the Government, and his constituents refuse to recognize the distinction between "transferred" and "reserved" subjects. If the Governor, acting with his Executive, takes measures for the maintenance of law and order which are unpopular with the electorate, or if, having failed to get taxes voted, he passes the Budget over the head of the Council, the Minister who does not protest by resigning is held to be party to these transactions. The consequence is that Indian Ministers in such circumstances either resign and go into Opposition, or if they remain in office, are considered to have gone definitely over to the side of the Executive and are deserted by their parties and attacked in the Indian Press. No one for a moment accepts the theory that, being responsible only for "reserved" subjects, they are blameless for the acts of the Governor and his Council on the "reserved" subjects. All alike, in the minds of the politicians and the electorate, are acts of the Government.

This, I have no doubt, is what would have happened in Great Britain in the same circumstances. But I confess it is a real surprise to me that Indian politicians should in so short a time have thrown up a theory of Ministerial responsibility which is the result of generations of experience in our own country. It seemed reasonable to hope that dyarchy would prove a sufficient working solution for a country new to constitutionalism until at least the statutory date fixed for its revision.

But when the full constitutional theory is thrown up, there is no getting away from it. I have tried to preach patience to excited politicians who have taken me into their confidence, but it is embarrassing to be brought up against acknowledged constitutional maxims from your own system, and asked what you think about them. Take finance, for example. The Indian Minister, or ex-Minister, asks you how he can fairly be held responsible for his own "transferred" subjects of education, agriculture or public health, when he has to accept as final the decision of the Executive that no money can be found for things that he considers indispensable. The retort of a British Minister in like case is to resign, or at least to put pressure on the Chancellor of the Exchequer by threatening to resign, but that, according to the theory of dyarchy, is barred to the Indian Minister. Yet if he honestly feels that his work is being destroyed by a refusal of money, what else can he do but resign, and how otherwise can he escape a collective responsibility for the finance of the Government?

It is acknowledged that in spite of everything much useful legislation has been carried by the Councils, and that public opinion has been stirred in a healthy way about social reform. And where there is no political bitterness and no need of exceptional measures to enforce the law, a Governor can ignore dyarchy and bring officials and Ministers into what is practically one Cabinet for all purposes. But Governors differ in character and disposition, and political bitterness is easily aroused. I am afraid it must be said that in many parts of India, dyarchy, instead of training Indians in responsibility, is having the opposite effect. In these the Indian who becomes a Minister is supposed to have joined the official class, and his party and its newspapers at once

become hostile to him. There is no idea of a party "coming into power," or so shaping its course in Opposition that it will have a definite policy when it becomes a Government. Criticism in such circumstances tends to become purely destructive, and politicians and newspapers carp at the Government without taking any responsibility for an alternative policy.

Two very untoward circumstances attended the launching in India of the reformed constitution. The first was that the country was still in the atmosphere of Amritsar. I do not wish to revive controversy about the rights and wrongs of the tragic happening in the Jalianwala Bagh, for tragic it must be called on any assumption. It is sufficient to say that the bitter feelings aroused on both sides were largely fatal to the good-will and forbearance that so delicately balanced a scheme required for its working. But next, and equally unfortunate, the first years were a period of unexpected financial stringency, which threw all the Governments into a perplexity about balancing budgets, let alone finding money for development. With a diminishing yield from taxation, so much of the revenue was absorbed by the "reserved" subjects comprising the essentials of government, as to leave a totally inadequate amount for the "transferred." Ministers who had incurred odium in persuading their Councils to accept new taxation found in the result that hardly any of it was available for the purposes for which they had demanded it and on which they had relied to justify themselves to the electors. This played into the hands of extremists who held them up to public odium as useless automata doing the will of their official masters. Still worse, it quenched the spirit of the nationalist "co-operator," who had honestly desired to work the reformed constitution.

4

The agitation that followed confused the lines of political controversy. It inevitably took the form of a demand for something more which was interpreted as pure intransigence. The Indians were said to be refusing to work the constitution offered to them and to be using it as a lever for further demands. There was no doubt an element of truth in this ; but the more important truth, it seems to me, is that large numbers of them, including some of the most sensible and moderate, were not demanding something more, but something different, something which from their point of view would work to enable them to justify themselves to their constituents. But at this point the Government of India was in a tangle, being tied up in the date 1929, which Parliament had assigned for the revision (on all material points) of the Montagu-Chelmsford scheme. To advance that date—as of course it could be advanced on the advice of the Government of India with the consent of Parliament—would have looked like yielding to agitation ; not to advance it was to postpone for three or four years changes which almost every competent authority admitted to be necessary, and to keep India in the meanwhile in a seethe of unnecessary controversy. Between the two things the Government of India sought safety by a promise to advance if the Indians would co-operate, to which the Indians retorted that they would co-operate as soon as the Government advanced.

This was the situation during the months that I was in India. The two parties were walking round in a circle, each saying to the other “ you begin,” the Indians brandishing their formula of “ responsive co-operation ”¹ and

¹ I.e., co-operation in response to advance on the part of the Government.

the Government its formula of "conditional advance." There is in most political situations a touch of absurdity which is more visible to outsiders than to those who are engaged in them ; but this struck me as peculiarly childish, and I felt serious doubts whether the Indian children thus put on their good behaviour were likely to show the best side of their disposition.

CHAPTER IX

THE CENTRAL LEGISLATURE

The Assembly at Delhi—Comparison with the American Congress—The Political Atmosphere—Electioneering in the Assembly—Advantages and Drawbacks of the Present System—The “Walking-out” of the Swarajists—Their Party Difficulties—The Worst of Both Worlds—The Lines of British Policy.

I

HAVING glanced at the situation in the provinces, let me now pass to the working of the Central Government as seen at Delhi. Here there is no question of dyarchy. All the departments are in the hands of officials, mainly British, who have the power of carrying on whatever happens. The Assembly is roughly in the position of the American Congress. The Executive is not responsible to it, but is anxious, if it can avoid doing so, not to act in opposition to its expressed opinions. The Assembly can legislate but subject to the veto of the Viceroy, who can legislate over its head if he deems it absolutely necessary to do so; but in that case he must justify himself to the Secretary of State and in the last resort to the British Parliament. There is also an Upper House or “Council of State,” entirely official or nominated, which may pass a Bill over the heads of the Assembly, if the Viceroy “recommends” it as necessary. All estimates and financial statements including the annual Budget are laid before

the Assembly, which can debate them or any part of them, but again subject to the powers of the Viceroy to "certify" what he thinks essential.

I have compared the Assembly to the American Congress, but there is one important difference. In America the members of the Executive are not members of and do not appear in Congress, unless they are summoned to give evidence before its committees. In India all heads of important departments are *ex-officio* members of the Assembly, and upon them falls the duty of answering questions and defending the legislative and financial proposals of the Government and its general policy whenever these are challenged. Their presence and liability to be challenged and criticized imparts a general liveliness and interest to the proceedings of the Assembly, apart altogether from its legislative functions.

The present Assembly-house is soon to be superseded by the new and magnificent chamber in the "New Delhi,"¹ but it is a handsome enough building and would be sufficient for most European assemblies of the same size. In form it is a compromise between the House of Commons and the typical continental Cham-

¹ Minor controversies about the elevation of Viceregal Lodge and its relation to the Secretariat seem to have obscured the fact that the new buildings, now nearing completion at Raisina, are beyond doubt the noblest group of public buildings in course of construction anywhere in the world to-day. The design does equal credit to both architects (Sir Edwin Lutyens and Sir Herbert Baker) and the new Parliament House with its three chambers, lobbies and committee rooms all under one roof in the same great rotunda is a model of beautiful and ingenious planning which may well excite the envy of European members of Parliament. It is scarcely to be expected that Indians will take an interest in these buildings if Europeans are unable to appreciate them; but I hope it is not even now too late to enlist Indian aid and interest in the completion of a work in which all India may well take pride.

ber. The benches are arranged in horseshoe fashion with a table for reporters in the centre, but there is no tribune; the member speaks from his place, and the "Treasury Bench" and the "Opposition Front Bench" face each other from opposite ends of the horseshoe. The Speaker is robed and sits on a dais under a canopy facing the Assembly, with his Clerk in front of him. To his right sit the Government and its supporters, mainly British officials, with a sprinkling of Indians; to his left the Indian parties, some in European dress, but most of the Swarajists in "khaddur" (i.e. home-spun cloth) and "Gandhi caps," which have an unfortunate resemblance to the English convict headwear. A few wear tight-fitting, clerical-looking frock-coats, which seem to be a political modification of the Brahmin's dress. The proceedings, so far as I have observed them, are highly decorous. The Swarajist may grow excited, but he still speaks of the official Minister as "my honourable friend;" everyone bows to the Chair, who is instantly obeyed.

The old parliamentary hand knows the difference between a political atmosphere which is fundamentally vicious, and one in which political parties do their work or play their games and yet remain in charity with each other. Having heard much of the bitterness of Indian politics, I was pleasantly surprised at what seemed to be the prevailing good-humour of the Assembly. Sir Alexander Muddiman, "the Home Member" who is leader of the House, seemed to be on excellent terms with the Swarajists, who talked about this "wretched Government." Sir Charles Innes was a skilful and conciliatory debater. And not less must be said for the Pandit Motilal Nehru, and for that old warrior, Rajput Rai, who speaks in a quiet parliamentary manner and is

treated with respect by all parties, British and Indian. One debate on the "Indianization" of the railway services particularly struck me. The Swarajist who put the case—which was that the Government was not carrying out its pledges as to the proportion of Indians to Europeans in the railways—stated it with careful moderation, and expressly disclaimed any idea of displacing Europeans. When corrected by "the Home Member," he said immediately that he accepted the correction, and after the Government had replied, everyone seemed satisfied, and compliments passed between the two benches in the best parliamentary style.

I do not wish to overstate it. On the day before I visited the Assembly the majority had rejected a large part of the railway budget, and if their vote had been taken seriously, the whole railway service would have been brought to a standstill. They knew, of course, that it would not be taken seriously, that the Viceroy would "certify" the necessary expenditure, or the State Council restore it, and everything go on as before. This is the weak point of all chambers cut off from the Executive. The knowledge that nothing will happen, when the majority makes these flourishes, encourages irresponsibility, and to some extent turns the chamber into an electioneering platform. Something ought to happen when an Opposition party goes this length, but what that something should be, is a subject on which I am not at all prepared to dogmatize. The Central Government of which the Legislative Assembly is the organ, cannot be staked on political experiments which may be innocuous in the provinces, and the Viceroy cannot throw the whole administrative machine out of gear because the Government is at feud with the politicians. But some parallel procedure to that by which,

in the provinces, the "reserved" subjects are cut down to the minimum when the votes for them are rejected, might possibly be devised to meet these cases.

2

The author of "The Lost Dominion" would, I imagine, be appalled if he could witness these proceedings. It would be deeply repulsive to him that the successors of Babar and Akbar should be explaining and justifying themselves to the mild Hindu, listening earnestly to his complaints, smiling tolerantly at his expletives, button-holing him in the lobby, dealing with him on the terms of easy familiarity which is the habit of a parliamentary assembly. All this within a mile of the great Fort, and almost in the shadow of the Peacock Throne (or where it used to be). When I was in Delhi fourteen years ago I talked to officials about the Morley-Minto reforms, and found many of them shivering at the thought of having to argue where they had formerly commanded, and to emerge from their offices and studies into the glaring publicity of an Assembly with reporters waiting on their words. It was not in the bond, they kept saying ; they were unaccustomed to public speaking, and argument with Indian politicians, who would probably beat them at the word-game, would be fatal to their prestige. Many an old official in the next few years went away thanking heaven that his time was up, and vowing that his son should never join a service in which he would have to submit to these mortifications.

I came back after fourteen years to find a considerable proportion of accomplished parliamentarians among the officials and many of these frankly saying that they found a new interest and zest in this public side of their duties. There is nothing in the world quite like the

modern Indian service, in which the same individuals act as officials and as politicians in the parliamentary arena, and the Government of India is certainly, as yet, very imperfectly equipped for the double task; but the possibility of playing the politician's part seems to me greatly to add to the attractiveness and variety of the Indian service; and if I were a young man, I should rejoice in the chance of the parliamentary adventure running side by side with, or as an alternative to the official career. Whatever may be the constitutional forms and limitations, contact with the elected Indian sharpens wits and brings a whole new range of subjects within the official vision. It also, for all he may pretend to the contrary, compels the Indian to listen to, and in a measure to understand the Government's point of view.

Of course there are a great many crude politicians and some with a fanaticism which defeats argument. But these ought to be compared, not with the staid middle-class politicians of Westminster, but with our own newcomers, whom they remarkably resemble. The race-conscious oratory of India is on exactly the same model as the class-conscious oratory of England, and it expresses the same mental attitude. At times it is difficult to keep one's temper with it in either country, but patience and a serious attempt to understand what it means and what it springs from, will, I believe, be rewarded.

For good or ill the permanent service in India is now embarked on a career which requires political as well as administrative abilities, and it will have somehow to be made equal to both parts of its duties. Officials of the old school say that a great deal of time which was formerly spent in administrative duties among the humble people of the provinces, is now spent in preparing answers

to innumerable questions and defending the Administration in the Assemblies and Councils ; and it seems to me evident that the personnel is too small to perform both duties with equal satisfaction. On the other hand, the Administration is brought more into contact with Indian opinion, and enabled to correct mistakes which might otherwise have been persevered in with disastrous results. But in any case the necessity of having men with political experience and parliamentary instincts in the high places of India is more and more borne in on one as one watches these proceedings. The question of how and when Viceroys and Governors should use the powers reserved to them, is a political one of the utmost delicacy, and nothing will solve it but the building up of a constitutional tradition which will secure the rights of the Assembly and Councils to act and to err within their own boundaries, so long as they do not overstep them.

3

I can imagine its being said, especially by those with whom the wish is father to the thought, that by "walking out" of the Assembly in a body, and declaring it to be a futile and useless institution as they did last March, the Swarajists themselves have signalized the failure of the new Constitution, and supplied the answer to the relatively favourable view of it I have just recorded. I believe that to be a mistaken inference which is founded on a superficial view of Indian politics. But to explain this matter needs a little digression and some detail which I will try to compress as much as possible.

On the day after the "walking out" incident, an ardent young Swarajist came to discuss it with me and to ask my opinion about it. He said he hoped it would make

a good impression in England. I said, I thought it would make a very bad impression in England, and that on the rare occasions on which British parties had practised this manœuvre it had always been condemned by the public. He argued the point very earnestly and said he felt sure Mr. Ramsay MacDonald would approve, and when I expressed a doubt about that, he said at all events it would make a favourable impression on Mr. George Lansbury.

Here I felt out of my depth, and the argument went by default, but I recall it because it illustrates an important point in Indian politics. The Indian politician has always in his mind the idea of appealing to the free parliamentary Britain against the "bureaucratic" Britain which he sees at work in India. He follows closely the strategy of parties in the British House of Commons, and feels himself on safe ground when he is following a Westminster model. His main idea is to reproduce at Delhi the system of responsible government as practised at Westminster, and he thinks that the British people must consent if the facts are known to them. The immense difference in the circumstances of the two countries counts for little or nothing in his mind; he thinks of government as a comparatively simple process, and is confident that, if he were given the chance, he could do as well as the "bureaucrats." Looking at the matter thus, he considers it pure perversity and lust of power to throw obstacles in the way of the complete emancipation which would leave him free to govern his own country in his own way, while Great Britain continued to guard him against outside intruders.

This is the view of the younger and more ebullient members of the Swaraj party. I doubt if it is the view of the cooler and wiser men. Many of these will tell

you frankly that great mistakes have been made in the last five years, and that they deplore the circumstances which make it appear that the Indian people are impracticable and irreconcilable. But as politicians they find themselves in a great difficulty. Political agitation has died down, and left them stranded with a policy which is neither one thing nor the other, neither non-co-operation, as Gandhi understood it, nor co-operation as the British understand it. Civil disobedience, as their leader, Pandit Motilal Nehru confessed when he led the "walk-out," is a lost cause, yet the Indian National Congress was so far committed to the policy of not working with the Administration that it felt obliged to instruct the parliamentary party to make a gesture in that direction in the last weeks before the dissolution of the 1923 Assembly and Councils. This, it was said, was absolutely necessary to rouse the electorate from their present apathy. Again and again I was told that neither the Congress nor the party could help itself, and that whether it was a wise move or a foolish move, the "walking-out" followed of logical necessity from the resolutions in which Congress had, wisely or unwisely, tied itself up at its meeting last December.

Congress had far better have left the parliamentary party and its leaders free to make their own decision when the time came. If they had been free, I do not think they would have decided on the "walk out." For they were left in the position of having got the worst of both worlds. Their whole effort in the previous three years had been to get back from Gandhism to some form of co-operation which would enable them to work as practical politicians. In this they had largely succeeded and most officials heartily acknowledged that they had "co-operated," and quite usefully "co-operated," both

in the Assembly and many of the Councils. But in order to keep up the theory that they were not "co-operating" they threw away the credit that they might have reaped as practical politicians, and left the British die-hards free to say that they were an impossible and an irreconcilable people, to whom no more concessions could be made. There was also more than a touch of absurdity in a protest which asserted in one breath that the Assembly and Councils were such futile and useless bodies that it was not worth while sitting in them, and in the next proclaimed the intention of making a heroic effort to increase the number of Swaraj members in these same bodies.

In talking to Swarajist leaders, I told them frankly that as a journalist I should find it impossible to make these tactics intelligible to English readers, and I doubt if they will make them intelligible to their own electors. But the very last thing to be desired for the Government is a tactical victory secured by the blundering of the Swarajists. As things stand, the opening is obvious and the score is easy. We can say if we choose, "*tu l'as voulu*, we have given you the chance, and since you decline it, we will do no more." And then things will remain at the deadlock in which the Swarajists say that they will co-operate if we advance, and we say that we will advance if they will co-operate. And finally, in 1929, we can send out a commission to certify that they have not co-operated and therefore that we cannot advance. In strict logic this, I suppose, would be the course of events, if the Swarajists maintained their present attitude up to the year 1929.

It would nevertheless be disastrous and for many reasons. In the first place, as I have said, the Swarajists, though a large party, are by no means the only party

in India, and it would be a serious mistake to penalize the other parties for their misdoings. In the next place, experience has brought to light defects in the present Constitution which ought to be remedied, whatever the attitude of any Indian party. The notion that these are to be put right only if a commission reports that the Indian people have behaved well, is not one that could be applied to any self-respecting Western nation, and it ought not to be applied to India. All these ideas belong to the nursery—"the children are to have lollipops, if they are good." Whether in East or West, political children are not likely to be good if they are handled in this way.

This has been one of the vices of the unhappy date 1929, which hangs over India as a year of predestined crisis. The politics of the Swarajist consist largely of a blind irritation at being constantly told that he must wait till the year 1929, and then will get nothing unless he has been good in the meantime. In India as elsewhere a Constitution should be mended as and when it proves defective; and in India especially thought needs to be concentrated as quickly as possible on the unsolved and very difficult constitutional problems which will have to be faced in the near future.

CHAPTER X

PROBLEMS IN THE BACKGROUND

An Incident at Calcutta—Opposition Journalism and its Disadvantages—A Halting Attitude—How it looks to an Englishman—An Immeasurable Boon to India—Conditions of Safety and Independence—Questions to be Faced—An Analogy from British Politics—The Benefits of Moderation.

I

I GOT myself into much trouble one day last February in Calcutta. The Indian journalists had with great kindness asked me to tea with them, and I went thinking that the occasion would be quite informal. I found that reporters were present and that I was expected to make a speech, and on the spur of the moment I had to dredge my mind for something to say. I decided on a little discourse on the difficulties and pitfalls of political journalism and especially of Opposition journalism, in which, as I knew, most of my hearers were engaged. I said I had been an Opposition journalist myself for twenty-six out of the forty years that I had been in journalism, and I knew from experience that when in Opposition one had to be constantly on guard against a mere negative attitude of carping criticism, since that, pursued every day, became sterilizing to the mind of the journalist. Criticism was good and necessary but it ought to be directed to positive ends and lead up

to the alternative policy which the critic desired to substitute for that of the Government.

It was all quite simple and platitudinous, and my hosts seemed to take it in good part, but when reported the next day, it considerably ruffled the Indian Press, and remonstrances poured in on me from all quarters and had scarcely abated when I left India. I was said to have shown my ignorance of the conditions of Indian politics and journalism, to have lectured the Indian journalist *de haut en bas*, to have given myself the usual airs of the superior Englishman dispensing wisdom to his inferiors. I was told quite politely but firmly that I was very much mistaken if I supposed that the Indian journalists were to be turned from their path by this magisterial discourse. They were in Opposition, intended to remain in Opposition, and as for alternative policies, they had them in abundance, but it was utterly useless to present them to a Government which constantly rejected them and was always in power. These must wait, until the constitutional battle had been won.

An Englishman innocent of the vernaculars can of course read only that portion of the Indian Press which is written in English, but so far as that is concerned, the observation that gave offence, is, I believe, one which would be made by any English journalist irrespective of his opinions on Indian policy. Much of this Press is ably and skilfully written, but as journalism, it is apt to miss its mark by an incessant swearing at large. It is a rule of journalism that if you shoot at everything you bring nothing down; and when day after day you read in the Indian Press that everything done by the bureaucracy is bad, and when every positive proposal is declared to be a red herring drawn across the trail of Indian Nationalism, you lose interest and finally cease

to read. And, unless I am much mistaken, the journalist himself loses interest, for the constant repetition of the same negative formulas is extremely boring to a writer.

This little controversy was quite friendly, and there was nothing at all in it that I could resent. But in case this book should fall into the hands of Indian journalists or politicians, I should like to pursue it a little further, for it lies near to the roots of Indian politics. There is much artificiality in the relations between the visiting Englishman and the politicians of India. The former either flatters and is flattered in an unmeaning way ; or pious platitudes which advance nothing are exchanged between the two. The Englishman who comes to India had better say frankly what his own views are and invite frank communications from Indians. Let me try then to state frankly certain things that struck me about the manner in which controversy is conducted in India.

Indian politicians, it seems to me, have fallen far too much into the habit of dismissing the British case as if it were a prejudice of "sun-dried bureaucrats," to employ their favourite expression. If they are seeking to advance their cause by argument, they would do better to discriminate between what is reasonable and necessary in the British position and what may be ascribed to prejudice or infirmity of mind. No sensible Englishman expects Indians to say that they love alien rule or will for ever forswear the hope of making their country independent of it. But what may fairly be expected is that they should realize what, as things are, would be the consequences of breaking British rule and losing the protection which Great Britain now affords them against the outer world, and if they do not desire these consequences, be prepared to make terms with a policy which will avoid them. What now most hinders advance is

an attitude which halts half way between these two things. Politicians and journalists, who are in private quite moderate, will for the satisfaction of extremists or for the rounding of an oratorical period, say things in public which, if they were seriously meant, would leave the British Raj no alternative but to dig in its heels and make an end of concessions. Very few of these things are seriously meant, and even of those which are seriously meant a liberal discount must be made for the transcendencies which are common in Eastern speech ; but however meant and however interpreted, they inflame the atmosphere and provide material for reactionaries.

2

What are the salient aspects of the Indian situation as seen by the traveller fresh from Europe and as he thinks the Indian ought to see them ? He will not, if he is wise, lay stress on the inability of the Indians to govern themselves. If he has seen any reasonably well-governed Indian state, large or small, Baroda, Jaipur, Jamnagar, he will have seen capable rulers at work, governing adequately and sometimes with high credit. It would strike him as probable that if Western influences were removed, India would turn away from democratic institutions and revert to her ancient ways of personal rule by more or less benevolent, more or less efficient, autocrats who would then arise among them. If he could imagine a good supply of these being maintained, and their being kept in their respective spheres and territories by some overruling Providence, he would conclude that the result, as measured in happiness, might not be bad for the mass of Indians. There would not be progress as the West understands the word, but the millions would live very much as they live now, and the educated minority

would have the satisfaction of feeling that they were being governed by men of their own race. Whether this would compensate them for the withdrawal of Western influences, he might think an open question, but he would not doubt that on the assumed conditions India could be governed by Indians without falling into anarchy, and probably in a manner that would satisfy the mass of Indians, so far as its internal affairs are concerned.

So far, so good. But then it immediately occurs to the same traveller that the assumed conditions would be as difficult to realize in India as they are in Europe or any other continent where there is a multiplicity of states and races. There would be no overruling Providence to keep the different rulers within their respective boundaries; in India as elsewhere the strong would encroach upon the weak, and the different principalities organize themselves for aggression or defence, and test their strength in struggles in which the less war-like would go down before the more war-like. No one coming from Europe can travel about India and get the sense of its vast spaces and different races without feeling that the greatest benefit which the British Empire has conferred on India is that which is least felt and seen, and therefore earns the least gratitude from the people of India—the benefit, namely, of an assured peace over an area very nearly as big as Europe and occupied by almost as many different nationalities. That these nationalities are not organized for war and need not waste their substance by arming against each other, and that they can live unarmed without the fear of invasion and slaughter and devastation of territory is a thought which is always in the mind of the European who comes fresh from the scene of war. To his eye it is an immeasurable boon.

And then of course the same traveller considers the sea-ways by which he has come and asks what would happen if India were left open to invasion from Europe, whether it is conceivable that she could from her own resources provide and man a fleet which would give her protection from foreign enemies and, if not, for how long her independence could be guaranteed. India complains bitterly of the cost of maintaining the small army which keeps internal order among three hundred and twenty millions of people, but this is a mere flea-bite compared with the cost which a European Power with a seventh or an eighth of its population thinks it necessary to incur for its defence.

3

I do not say that the Indian politician or journalist should look at these things from the same angle that the European does, but he may fairly be expected to realize that they are very important things and that they raise questions which, however and by whom India is governed, have somehow to be faced. How is India to be kept united and at peace, or let us say, to put it in the least invidious manner, prevented from relapsing into the condition of Europe, if she is not held together by a strong central government, and what prospect would there be of a strong central government, if the British Raj were removed? How is she to be defended from aggression except by a navy strong enough to cope with the fleets of other Powers, and how is this navy to be provided if not by Great Britain? I have had a great deal of pleasant intercourse with Indian journalists and politicians, and overflowing hospitality and kindness from them, and I hope they will not think me ungrateful if I say that much confusion is caused and that much

argument runs to waste because these questions are not frankly faced. If Indian politicians could bring themselves to acknowledge that Great Britain performs functions—I won't say "services"—for India, which in the present state of the world are indispensable to her, and if they would understand that Englishmen are not making any hypocritical pretence when they profess anxiety about these indispensables, the air would be greatly cleared.

It is natural that people who have lived remote from Western politics should take for granted a great many things that the European knows to be the result of sustained effort and sacrifice; it is natural that they should not have the instinctive apprehension of dangers and difficulties that a European must have. But it bewilders the European to find these dangers and difficulties treated as non-existent or unimportant, and all structures built on that basis seem to him doomed to disappointment and failure. There are very few Indians who, if it were put to them outright, would wish us either to retire from the internal government of their country or to disclaim responsibility for its safety from foreign attack. But there are a great many who talk as if they had not considered what our rôle is, or the difficulty of finding a substitute for it if we ceased to play it, and this necessarily prevents concentration on the things which are practicable and attainable within the limits of safety for India and Great Britain.

Again and again in talking to Indians I have been reminded of the controversy between Labour and Capital in Great Britain. Just as British Labour men went into the General Strike without realizing that it could only succeed by overthrowing the Government and

producing revolution, so vast numbers of Indians followed Gandhi into his non-co-operation movement without realizing that it could only succeed if it destroyed the British Raj and threw Great Britain out of India. Just as British trade-unionists protested, even when the General Strike was in operation and visibly paralysing the country, that they were peaceable citizens aiming only at a legal economic purpose, so the majority of Indian non-co-operators indignantly disclaimed the idea that they were anarchists, and claimed, like their leader, to be law-abiding pacifists. Both alike are bound to realize that the words which they use about their actions are of little consequence compared with their results. There comes a point when a Government must resist or cease to be a Government. Both at home and in India the question for practical men to decide is whether they wish to drive the Government to the point at which it must resist them, or whether they will accept a boundary beyond which Government must prevail and be content to work within it. Too often the Indian politician seems never to have framed this question, or if he has, to be in a haze about the answer to it. He prejudices his demands by using language which suggests that he is unappeasable and at the same time tells you that he wishes nothing subversive.¹ I believe that the great

¹ A fair example of this may be found in the Pandit Motilal Nehru's attitude to "civil disobedience," i.e. non-co-operation as Gandhi conceived it. "The Congress resolution," he said in a speech at Lahore (April 11, 1926), "admits that while civil disobedience is a legitimate weapon to be used as a last resort, the country is not prepared for it. What we undertake to do is to educate the country to resort to it, whenever it comes, it may be fifty years or a hundred years hence." The Pandit thus in effect banishes civil disobedience from practical politics, but he cuts himself off from the advantages of so-doing by undertaking

majority of Indian politicians are honest in disclaiming subversive intentions, and if they will accept a friendly word of advice, it is that they should so act as to give themselves the benefit of their moderation.

to prepare the country for it " fifty years or a hundred years hence." Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru's observation, that " if we do not believe in civil disobedience, it is no use talking of it or holding out threats which we cannot now materialize," seems to me well justified.

CHAPTER XI

THE PETER PAN THEORY OF INDIA

“Sun-dried Bureaucrats” and their Critics—A Compliment and Some Vinegar—The Complaint of the “Children”—The Old Theory and the New—The Unchanging East and Its British Instructors—What India must do for Herself.

I

HAVING spoken freely of what seems to me ill-considered in the Indian attitude, let me go on to speak of what causes friction and irritation in the British attitude.

A few pages back I quoted the expression “sun-dried bureaucrat” as applied to the British officials in India. It is the cliché of the hour in Indian political circles, and one hears it a dozen times in an afternoon’s talk. That the British official is a good fellow in private is freely admitted, and many a time I have heard an extremist politician say that so-and-so—naming a highly typical member of the “sun-dried” class—was one of the best of his friends. Ten days after the “walk-out” at Delhi last March, Lajpat Rai paid a handsome tribute to the officials at Delhi. “Considering everything,” he said, “I am free to say that the present members of the Executive have, on the whole, shown remarkable restraint. They are generally courteous and affable. That is the strongest point in the character of an

Englishman and gives him immense power and influence.”¹

This is well and truly said, and that he should say it does credit to a stout-hearted man whom all parties like and respect. It is just this courtesousness and affability (reciprocated, it is fair to say, by Indians) which is breaking up animosities, and fusing elements that on the surface look stubbornly hostile. Here the reforms have been entirely justified. Men who were formerly segregated in their respective camps have been compelled to work together, to understand each other's methods, and to pool their minds on a great range of subjects which are uncontroversial. This is the saving merit of parliamentary life, whatever the Constitution may be; and to have had this experience has been as good for the British official as for the Indian.

But Lajpat Rai puts a little vinegar into his compliment. He says of a certain official speech that “a vein of ridicule and contempt is certainly visible in it. It is always

¹ *Advocate of India*, March 16, 1926. The Pandit Motilal Nehru, in a letter (*Hindustan Times*, March 12, 1926) denying a widely current report that he had been blackballed on being put up for a certain English club and that his anti-British attitude was due to this, wrote: “I suspect that there is a general impression abroad that I have at one time or another experienced some grave social discourtesy at the hands of some highly-placed Englishmen. Let me take this opportunity to declare publicly that nothing could be farther from the truth. I and many members of my family have mixed with English people as freely as with Indians and we have all invariably received the most cordial treatment on terms of perfect equality both in India and England. Our association with English men and women of all classes has left behind nothing but the most pleasant memories. Strange as it may seem to some, I have found the ‘sun-dried bureaucrat’ to be the most charming fellow in the world once he has put off the bureaucratic mask which is so indispensable a part of his official kit.”

present in the speeches of the Government members in answer to the obstructive tactics of the Opposition." It is this "vein of ridicule and contempt" in their public attitude which the Indian politician most often imputes to the "sun-dried bureaucrats"; and the feeling that he is being treated as a child whose performances are slightly ridiculous to its elders and superiors is a chronic irritant at the back of his mind. It is so indefinable a thing that you cannot put your finger on anything positive and say that here or there is the offence; the Indian senses it in the atmosphere in much the same way as the Labour man at home when he complains of the "Oxford manner" and "superior air" of the upper-class or middle-class politician.

2

How much ground is there for this complaint? There is this much ground—that for a great many years in the last century the traditional theory of the Civil Service was that the Indian was a child who must be treated justly and humanely, and also at times firmly, but not initiated into the mysteries of its elders. This has insensibly lasted on into modern times and breaks out now and again in a vein of sarcasm—this I think is a fairer word than ridicule and contempt—at the expense of the children in politics. Indians dislike sarcasm and it is better avoided even under provocation; but this would be a small matter if it were not for what it implies, and that is worth a little examination.

If you begin by saying that Indians are children and then go on to say that the East is unchanging, you must by the mere process of putting two and two together come to the conclusion that the children never grow up. It is not the child theory, but the Peter Pan theory which

is the trouble between East and West, and especially between British and Indians. The old-style Indian Civil Servant was an ideal guardian for an Indian Peter Pan. He brought with him the public school and Oxford and Cambridge tradition with all the excellent things that go with it—chivalry, courage, fair-play, self-confidence, the sense of responsibility, the habit of command and complete integrity. He went out into the country, risked his life and his health in doing simple services for the simple people under him, sat alone and unguarded among the millions surrounding him, kept watch on the frontier and composed the quarrels of warring tribes and sects. He was kind even when he was firm, and he amused the children with his games and sports. Within the limits that he set to them his services were beyond praise, and India would be basely ungrateful if she forgot them. But he conceived himself as presiding over an eternal nursery which would never question his authority and always require the same services to be performed for it.

He fought for this theory very gamely, and for a generation or more persuaded the home public to accept it, and kept the Padgett M.P.s and other intrusive globe-trotters who questioned it in their proper place. But in the end he was his own undoing, for in spite of himself he was all the time infecting the East with the ideas of the West and creating needs and wants which were soon in conflict with his notion of the unchanging East. His success in checking disease and keeping the peace brought a rapid increase of population whose needs could only be met by a bold application of Western science and engineering, and if they were not so met, were bound to be an increasing cause of discontent and agitation. And in the meantime, he

had with the same conscientiousness that he performed all his other duties, provided a select number of Indians with the kind of education that he had found good for himself, the literary and rhetorical kind admired by the English universities, which is supposed to produce the best officials, but which also, incidentally, produces orators and agitators and politicians and journalists. Thus an enormously increased population with unsatisfied wants was provided with leaders who were as clever as their Western instructors and had been carefully grounded in the political ideas and methods of the West.

It could not have been otherwise, for side by side with his belief that the East was unchanging, this conscientious administrator had a sense of duty which compelled him to do things which, if they had any effect at all, were bound to make it change and change very rapidly. But it is no reflection on him and his kind to say that the idea of governing a vast country of immense potential resources with a handful of public-school and university-trained men from another continent was bound to pass as soon as its people became conscious of their needs and had voices to express them. A leavening of these men will always be desirable, and India, I hope, will continue to get them ; but her pressing need is for engineers, men of science, men of business, who will, in the right sense of the word, exploit her, and by so doing, combat the poverty which is the great latent cause of unrest. Gandhi's complaint, which I have recorded in another chapter, that we have broken into her Eastern life without bringing her Western prosperity, has undoubtedly some substance in it. She is as yet insufficiently provided with roads and railways ; the irrigation of her thirsty land is still in its infancy ; her agriculture is primitive ; the education of the mass

of her people has hardly begun. We have not done, and with the means at our disposal could not have done for India on at all the same proportionate scale what Lord Cromer and his engineers did for Egypt in the first twenty years of the British occupation.

3

Indeed, it is true to say that we cannot do it with our own resources or any personnel that we can supply. The exploitation, in the sense of which I have used the word, of a country as big as India is beyond the capacity of any corps of officials that could be sent to her by Great Britain or any other European country. It is work which must for the most part be done by Indians themselves. We can supervise and train, provide a small number of experts, and send out machinery, but when all this is done, success will still depend on Indian energy and competence and the willingness of Indians to submit to taxation for their own advantage. But this means that the children must grow up and that we and they must put behind us the theory of an unchanging East, and substitute for it the idea of an advancing and developing India. Sentimental illusions will not help either of us in this situation. India is far too deeply committed to Western ways to find safety in a revival of her old life. Her population would have to be reduced by half before it could spin its own cloth or supply its own needs. Her aim must be to make a civilization of her own in which East and West will be blended in a result which will be neither the one nor the other, but characteristically Indian. At this stage she can neither dispense with British aid nor rely on it to do for her the things that must be done if she is to solve her social and material problems. Only a Government

trusted by Indians and to a large extent manned by them will be able to combat the religious and caste prejudices which impede agricultural reform and in a hundred other ways impoverish the people and retard their progress. Only a Government of this kind will be able to persuade the mass of Indians to submit to the taxation which is necessary, for example, to establish elementary education. This is not on our side a question of "lost dominion"; and there could be no solution of it for us or for India, if we thought of it in these terms. It is a question on both sides of finding the appropriate form of government for the "moral and material progress of India," to apply that long-consecrated phrase to the new conditions. India is so situated that she cannot dispense with our aid or be sure of any independent existence without our protection, but she is also at the stage at which she can only get forward by developing her own national life. This is recognized by the best officials in India, but the Peter Pan theory which belongs to the old order has still enough life in it to cause a good deal of irritation and friction between the official class and the politicians.

CHAPTER XII

VILLAGE LIFE IN INDIA

The "Illiterate" Masses—A Gulf Fixed—A Speech in the Assembly—How the Multitude Live—The Indian Village—Heavily in Debt—Functions of the Money-lender—Village Industries and Spinning—Religion and Caste—Position of Women—Sacred Animals and Prohibition of Slaughter—Subdivision of Holdings—A Complicated Life—The Agricultural Commission.

I

IT is a great mistake to underrate the importance of politics in India, but no one can travel about the country without becoming aware of a vast background into which the politicians, as yet, seem scarcely at all to have penetrated. While the great majority of politicians are urban literates, the immense majority of the population are rural illiterates. I use the word "illiterates" in no invidious sense, for having seen something of the villagers, I believe that a great many of them are of high intelligence, though they are unable to read or write. But only five millions out of nearly three hundred millions are enfranchised, and the gulf between this great multitude and the urban politicians is far greater than that between the agricultural labourer and the townsman who may represent him in Great Britain.

This aspect of Indian life requires careful analysis,

for some conclusions are drawn from it which are extremely hazardous. For example, one hears it commonly said that the Government of India is trustee for these millions against the small minority of politicians who claim to speak for them. If this means that it is bound to consider their interests when it conceives them to be threatened, that is, of course, incontestable ; but if it means that the Government can rely on their support against the politicians, or appeal to them over the heads of the politicians, no inference could be less secure. As in Egypt, so in India, the politicians can go among the peasants, play upon their grievances, and kindle emotions which officials are powerless to allay. Gandhi alone had, and may have again, a power over the Indian people which no European can rival, and leaders may at any time rise up from the educated minority who will set the heather on fire through a whole province, or for that matter, through all India.

But this does not mean that for ordinary political purposes any real touch is established between the politicians and the rural masses. I have been taken to task for saying that Indian political parties have no social programmes in our sense of the word, and much literature has been sent me to show that many such programmes are, so to speak, in store. Let me amend the phrase then, and say that they have none which they are placing before their constituents as political issues at the present time. The Swarajist will tell you that opinion must not be divided or the mind of India diverted from the supreme object of winning self-government ; and he will insist that it is only through self-government that social reform can be brought about. His favourite instance is Japan—Japan which in sixty years has leapt from mediævalism into the forefront of modern progress,

while India has remained stagnant. "How has she done it?" he will ask triumphantly, and the answer is, as you would expect, that she has done it by being mistress in her own house, and bringing to bear the saving graces and virtues of independence and self-government.

I will not pause here to argue about the differences between Japan and India, and I do not at all wish to deny that Indians may be able to do for India a great many things that we, without fear of offending religious scruples or increasing taxation, are unable to do. That, indeed, is the chief part of the case for going forward with self-government. But whatever the future may bring, there is undoubtedly at this moment a gulf fixed between the politician and the peasant which makes it extremely dangerous to accept the opinions of the one as covering the needs of the other, and which is unlikely to be bridged until the peasant himself sends his own spokesman to the Councils and Assembly.

I listened one day in the Assembly at Delhi to a speech which I had long been waiting for, and it was made by an Eurasian or "Anglo-Indian," as it is now the fashion to call the members of that community. The speaker pointed successively to the Swarajist bench and the official bench, and charged both of them with neglecting the interests of the great masses in their zeal for Protection.

"You Swarajists," he said, "think fiscal autonomy a fine thing to put on your banner, and you officials, having no zeal for Free Trade, think it a very convenient thing to concede to the Swarajists. But between you, you have sacrificed a very useful revenue (the cotton excise) and have left the masses of India to pay more for their cotton for the enrichment of a small number of well-to-do cotton-spinners. And now you are proceeding to raise the price of steel and other things that India urgently needs, again for the benefit of an infinitesimal number of producers whom you had far better have subsidized, if they must be helped. The masses

of India have no voice in these matters and nobody to *protect* them, and they won't know what has happened. But they will know that life has become harder and dearer, and then the Swarajists as usual will round on the Government and say it is all their fault, and this time the Government will thoroughly deserve it."

I quote this speech not to revive the fiscal question, but to record the speaker's warning that the interest of the masses—the 300 millions of struggling people who are at the back of all Indian problems—may too easily be forgotten in the controversies between officials and politicians.

2

How do these masses live? What are they thinking? Men who have spent a lifetime among them speak cautiously about the answers to these questions, and I can only set down certain impressions in the hope that they may help the reader to realize what the problem is.

All over India one sees this multitude working in the fields, men, women and children together, clad in all the colours of the rainbow, and in all the gradations of clothes and no clothes—from the swelling drapery of the women to the loin cloth of those who dig, and the innocent nakedness of the children. They seem to have discovered that the head is the strongest part of the human frame. The women walk perfectly upright with tall earthenware jars or round brass pots on their heads, and as often as not a child in their arms. If the men have a heavy load to carry, they put it on their heads or strap it from their foreheads to their shoulders. They seem to be always on the move, accompanied by their bullock-carts and their buffaloes, their cows and their goats.* Watch at any railway crossing towards

evening and you will see a dozen bullock-carts waiting and whole families surrounding them.

The plains are dotted with their villages, which are generally clusters of one-storied mud-huts, some of them round and thatched, like old-fashioned bee-hives, others oblong with flat roofs. Little holes towards the tops of the walls serve for windows, and nothing more is needed in this climate. Now and again there is a two-storied white house, with tiled roof, where the zemindar (landlord) or a prosperous merchant lives, and sometimes the white-washed dome of a mosque or the mitre-shaped tower of a temple rises above the roofs. The whole is pleasantly surrounded by trees and the vivid green of the bananas is brightly splashed against the brown background. Within the village, the huts are tightly packed with winding lanes between them. There seems to be no plan; everyone builds where it suits him, and the passage ways are evolved out of the houses.

There is the usual debris and litter in the lanes and in a circle round the village. You say at first sight that the dirt is intolerable, but the insides of the huts are often scrupulously clean, and since furniture is cut down to the minimum, it is easier to be tidy in a small space. A well-to-do Indian lady told me that she had no fear for the future, for if she lost her money, she could easily go back to the village and live there for thirty rupees a month. I asked her how she would bear the squalor and the company. She said that it was not squalid, and that the villagers were the nicest and the most intelligent people in India. A medical officer partly confirmed this, but added that he was totally unable to persuade them that when they had turned their refuse out of doors there was anything more to be done. The idea of their drink-

ing-water becoming contaminated, or of the children's milk being infected through the cows drinking contaminated water is beyond their comprehension. Still more, the notion that flies, mosquitoes and fleas are dangerous to human health. So the villages are swept by plague, malaria and cholera, and the infantile mortality is terrible. The average length of life in India is about 25 years, as compared with 50 in the United States and 56 in Great Britain.

According to European standards, the Indian villager lives in deep poverty. An average family of five, owning or leasing its land, earns about £20 a year in our money, and as a rule it will only do this if all the children are at work from the age of five and upwards.¹ The labourers or landless men (of whom there are nearly fifty millions in India) earn even less, and are naturally attracted to the jute and cotton mills of the towns, where the wages, though low, are princely compared with their earnings in the country. The principal crop is rice, which in this country is the staff of life, and after this come millet, wheat, pulse, oil-seeds and cotton in a descending order. A considerable quantity of sugarcane and tobacco is also grown, and jute and tea are large commercial enterprises in certain districts. Agriculture as practised by the villager, is still in a primitive condition. His plough is a wooden stick with an iron point to it, which even when drawn by a yoke of buffaloes or oxen

¹ The problem of education in rural India is greatly complicated by the necessity which parents are under of keeping children at work in the fields. The best that can be hoped for at present is a very simple education adapted to agriculture in night-schools. It is said that child-labour in the fields is not so exhausting as to preclude this.

does little more than scratch the surface. He draws his water from a well by a bucket attached to a rope, which is passed over a wheel and drawn down an inclined plane by a bullock. All the time he is fighting with a very uncertain climate, for the monsoon which is life or death to him, varies in force year by year, and he has always to look out for the lean year which brings famine.

Small wonder that he is very often heavily in debt. He has little means of storing his grain, and must sell most of it at harvest-time when prices are low. At this season he must pay his taxes, and his rent, if he hires land in addition to his own. Often when he has sold everything, he has to borrow to go on, and borrow again to get seeds and implements when he needs them. He will also borrow for a marriage festival or a dowry for his children—his position in the village depends on his making a splash on these occasions—or to go on pilgrimage to Benares. The money-lender is generally execrated, and his rates seem usurious, but he represents an immense vested interest, and as things are, the villager could not get on without him. He acts as middle-man for the purchase and sale of grain, and sells the village a great many things that it wants, such as cloth, salt and oil. In a few districts he is gradually being supplanted by co-operative societies, but progress in this direction is slow. It should be said that the money-lender does not generally ruin his victim; more often he keeps him at work and becomes his master.

In former times the village was a self-contained unit; it not only tilled the land; it supplied its own needs by its own handicrafts. But modern manufactured goods have broken in, and village industries are waning. Gandhi sits at Ahmedabad and keeps repeating "Spin, spin," as the word of wisdom for the villager, but those

who follow his advice find the results disappointing. The hand-loom cannot compete with the cotton-mill, and the actual earnings fall far below the estimates. In the months when work is slack on the land the men find it better to get a job on public works, or go as coolies to the towns, and when the women have done their work on the land and looked after the family, their strength is exhausted. Nevertheless, competent people hold that village handicrafts of the right kind, properly organized, will fill a gap in village life and add to the earnings of the worker.

Such with the necessary qualifications for different parts of the country, is the economic conditions of about 300 millions of people in India. If the relatively light taxation of the country is felt as a grievous burden, the reason is that the great mass of people are in this state of poverty, and because they are in this state of poverty, money cannot be found to educate their children, or to improve their condition. Somehow, if India is to go forward, this vicious circle has to be broken.

3

The Indian village is saturated with religion and caste, and the two play into each other's hands. There are social distinctions in all countries and among the poor as among the rich. In the English town in which I was brought up there were at least five castes which practically never intermarried. We need not, therefore, give ourselves airs over the Hindus, but there is a real distinction between Indian and other castes. The Hindu holds a man's caste to be an infallible index to the state of his soul. If born a Brahmin, he has been religious in his earlier lives; if an outcaste, he is in purgatory for his previous sins. This is what so complicates the

problem of the sixty million "untouchables," about whom Gandhi testifies so courageously. To the pious and orthodox, Gandhi seems to be threatening the foundations of religion, and not a few of the "untouchables" themselves think it an impiety to abate their predestined penance.

I have often been told by educated Indians that caste is disappearing in India, and it is true that when men travel or engage in politics and business together they gradually put it aside. It is too inconvenient to be obliged to provide separate meals and to refrain from the free intercourse which the common business requires. But even in these circles it is still an advantage to have been born a Brahmin, and when one passes from them to the millions in the background, there seems to be little change from the old ways. The villages are still seamed with the dividing lines of caste and sub-caste involving them in the most intricate network of rules and tabus. The castes must not intermarry and some of them cannot eat with the others; if it is a question of craft, they must do one kind of work and not another kind of work. The caste is trade-union, and also in a measure benefit-society, for its members acknowledge the obligation to help each other. My servant, who came from Madras, said that in his village there were sixteen principal castes, and he spoke with awe of Brahmins, who are on top of all the rest. And then within the castes is the family with obligations to all its members to the third and fourth degree. Nothing is more admirable than the unquestioning acceptance of these family claims by the humblest of Hindus, and together with caste it so completely covers the ground as to make a poor-law unnecessary. It is, nevertheless, a great handicap to the successful and enterprising. No sooner does

a man begin to accumulate a little than all his poor relations—not brothers and sisters only, but cousins and second cousins and third cousins—are on his doorstep, putting in their claim to the roof over their heads and the two meals a day which must on no account be denied. Family hangers-on who live a purely parasitical life appear to be a great multitude in India. There are houses in Calcutta in which a hundred members of the same family are housed and fed by the one member who has got on in the world, and on a smaller scale the well-to-do villager pays the same toll.

And then in addition to caste and family, one must consider the condition of women and their seclusion. I have asked how far this is breaking down, and the answers have been very dubious. Among the educated and emancipated undoubtedly it is doing so, and there are women's movements on foot in Calcutta and the big towns which promise quicker progress. But once more little seems to be changed among the millions in the background, whether Hindu or Mohamedan. In the humbler ranks segregation is impossible, and men and women seem to mingle freely. But as prosperity increases it becomes possible, and that the women should be purdah is then a sign of respectability and social standing, which is greatly cherished even in the villages. It is unfortunately practised by a great many who cannot afford it, and have not the accommodation for it, and this adds greatly to overcrowding and evil sanitary conditions. The statistics of plague show that the purdah women have an appreciably greater liability than those who are not secluded. Other institutions that linger and defeat reformers are infant marriage and perpetual widowhood. What with the inmarrying of its castes, its juvenile marriages, and the enforced sterility

of a large number of its women, India is a country to make the eugenist despair. Sexual precocity is one of the curses of the country, and a great hindrance to education.

Religion enters into every corner and cranny of this system, and the life of the villager is governed to an inconceivable degree by ritual observances. Hinduism can be described alternately as a chaos of superstition and idolatry, and as a profound, subtle, and mystical theory of God and existence; and both descriptions would be true. When one tries to think of the innumerable gods, goddesses, rivers, trees, animals which are worshipped in India, it would be easier to say what things are not sacred than what things are. There are traditional deities and local deities, festivals innumerable, endless shrines, and sacred places at which lamps should be lit and offerings made, occasions on which the sacred texts should be read—all this uncontrolled by any Church or ruling authority—and the Hindu who wishes to stand well with the higher powers must walk warily every day, lest he stray from the path. Yet this paganism seems to go hand in hand with a simple piety which redeems and civilizes what would otherwise be pure paganism. When I talked to my servant who came from the Madras village, he spoke like an evangelical Christian; “Is it good to live or bad to die?” “Neither, what God wills I do, when God calls I go.”

The same man told me that nothing was slaughtered in his village. The cow, of course not, nor any member of the family—buffalo, ox or calf. But neither the goat nor the chicken nor even the stray dog. This is one of the perplexities of the village reformer. Where little fodder can be laid up for them, the sacred animals get the barest living out of the parched ground, and the

bullock alone, which is the foundation of the family fortune, seems to be tolerably well cared for. The dung cannot be put back into the ground because most of it has been dried and used as fuel—the burning of which makes the characteristic smell of all India—and even the bones must not be used as manure. In practice the sanctity of the cow is fatal to the breed of cattle.¹

The Indian land-system, or say rather, the many land-systems of different parts of the country, are a formidable subject with which I am not qualified to deal in any detail. There is a general agreement that the subdivision of holdings which has followed the increase of population, is one of the great causes of poverty and that it should somehow be remedied. In regard to these holdings the Indian village is in much the same state as the English before the Enclosure Acts. Just as the English yeoman had his holding in little parcels scattered over the "open field," so the Indian has little plots here and little plots there divided from each other and from the plots of his neighbours. This makes cultivation difficult and wasteful, and the Indian reformer, like the English, will be faced with the problem of consolidation. It is to be hoped that he will study and be warned by the English method, which in the process of consolidation and enclosing sacrificed the small man to the big, and practically wiped out the yeoman class. This should, above all things, be avoided in India.

¹ At the Bangalore meeting of the Board of Agriculture in 1924, it was estimated that out of the 146 millions of bovine cattle in British India, 16 million oxen and 8.5 million cows were, allowing for all deductions, entirely superfluous. The cost of maintaining these amounts at a minimum figure to Rs. 176 crores. This annual economic loss is over four times the entire land revenue of British India. See "India in 1924-25," by L. F. Rushbrook Williams, pp. 239-40.

Enough has been said to show that we are dealing with an extremely complicated kind of existence, and that to deal with it wisely will need infinite tact and patience. The European who looks into one of these villages feels as if he were standing outside a bee-hive, and wonders whether, if he pokes his stick into it, he may not do untold mischief which he will be unable to repair. Described in economic terms, the condition of these hives must, by any European standard, be pronounced deplorable, and yet when you see the cheerful and kindly people, with their fascinating children, and get a smiling welcome when you walk about their humble abodes, you feel that there must be some virtue and happiness in this existence which escapes the economic analysis. All things are so different under the Indian sun that almost nothing that one can say about them is true without correction or qualification.

* * * * *

While I was writing this chapter, the appointment of the Agricultural Commission, for which Professor Gangulee did so much preliminary work in England last year, was announced ; and it is understood that the new Viceroy, Lord Irwin, is as hot on this scent as his predecessor, Lord Reading. Under its terms of reference the Commission is confined to the methods of cultivating the land, but it cannot go deeply into these without raising questions which touch far-reaching interests—interests of the landowner, the money-lender, the lawyer, the priest, the caste, the family—which now enclose all India in a network of strangling relations. The Government is cautious—its critics say timid—in the limitations that it imposes on this inquiry, but if the Commission only succeeds in painting a faithful picture of conditions in India, it may change the face

of Indian politics. When we seriously start out to stir the masses of India, to educate them, to kindle their interest in the betterment of their own conditions, we shall do as momentous a thing as when we started out to educate the middle-class. It is our duty, but let no one think it is easy or uncontroversial.

CHAPTER XIII

THE PUNJAB

Analogy with Egypt—A Remarkable Recovery—A Visit to Ferozepore—Canal-Heads—Creating Land—The Value of a Surplus—Mohamedan Progress.

I

ISPOKE in the previous chapter about the newly-appointed Agricultural Commission and the hopes that are founded on it. But the impression must not be left that nothing is being done, meanwhile. I heard of the work of the Agricultural Departments in different parts of India and on my two visits have seen several model farms. Let me without prejudice to the work of other provinces, throw a gleam of hope on the agricultural problem by setting down briefly what I saw in the Punjab.

In looking at the Punjab one is perpetually reminded of Egypt. Like Egypt it is a mainly Mohamedan country and its minority of Hindus are in much the same position as the Copts in Egypt. Like Egypt, it depends on irrigation and has a potential wealth which may be realized to an indefinite extent, if water can be provided. Like Egypt, too, it seems to have found its Cromer in Sir Malcolm Hailey, its present Governor, who with an exceptionally able staff to back him, has in a few years converted a large deficit in its Budget into

a substantial surplus, and is pushing ahead with an active policy of development, in which irrigation, education, medical services, the establishment of co-operative societies, and the construction of roads and railways are all comprised.

Less than eight years ago the Punjab seemed to be the principal danger-spot of India. Agitation was new to it and had worked like madness in the blood among a population which did not know the rules of the game or the distinction which politicians are accustomed to draw between words and action. There followed the tragedy of Amritsar and the perpetual resurrection of the controversy about it in Parliament and the Press at home. If this has been forgotten sooner in the Punjab itself than in the rest of India, it is because the Administration has had the good sense to turn swiftly from repressive measures to a constructive policy which interests the people and is plainly for their benefit. The result is that the "Reforms" are working more efficiently in this province than almost anywhere else in India, and that the population has passed in a few years from dangerous agitation to friendly co-operation.

I drove the forty miles from Lahore to Ferozepore to see the great engineering works on the Sutlej River, which are raising the level of that river and controlling its flow so as to provide "heads" for three new irrigation canals which will bring a vast new acreage under cultivation. It is large-scale engineering work, requiring a technique of which the Public Works Department has made a special study. This Department does everything itself, employing neither contractors nor sub-contractors; its labour is entirely Indian, and nearly all its assistant engineers, inspectors, and foremen are also Indian, working under Mr. Burkett, the British engineer in charge.

All the tribes of India seemed to be assembled on this spot, with large numbers of women and children accompanying them, and I have a vivid memory of gay turbans and glistening brown backs thrown into relief against the white sands of the river bed under the cloudless blue sky. Pathans had brought their teams of donkeys from the hills; and I spoke to some of them through an interpreter, and they said it was a first-rate job, with good money and excellent food. They laughed cheerfully when I asked them whether they would go on working all through the summer—when the thermometer will register 110 degrees in the shade and on hot days three or four degrees more. The pace, no doubt, slacks down as the heat increases, but it is a law of labour in this land to spread out its toil over a long summer day and take things easy when the sun is high.

I was pleasantly struck by the relations between the engineer in charge and these people. He looks after them well, knows what they can do, listens patiently to their grievances, and will not drive them beyond their strength. But he gets the work done within scheduled time, and considering the magnitude of the operation, it seemed an amazingly short time. At a certain stage it had been necessary to divert the river temporarily from its usual channel, and the Sutlej is a river which carries more than twice the volume of water of the Thames at Westminster. This was safely contrived in a few months, and work was now proceeding on the old river-bed, where weirs and dams of solid masonry were being constructed. I came away with a sense of the ease and mastery with which these river-engineers were handling their seemingly impossible tasks and of the enormous benefit which they are conferring on the people of the province.

For in a space of three years or so many million acres of new land will have been brought under cultivation, and new schemes are in contemplation which will do as much again. This makes all the difference to the people of the Punjab between famine and plenty—between the restlessness of want and the quiet of prosperity. Thus developed, this region may become as prosperous as Egypt, and the Government be provided with a source of revenue which will solve the problem of taxation. I was told that a well-considered “canal-head” scheme brings in a return of 18 per cent immediately on its completion, so that one successful scheme provides the means of financing the next. I heard a lively debate in the Council at Lahore as to whether the water-surplus should be given back in reduced rates or kept for further developments, and it was exactly the kind of debate which one might have heard on a similar issue in the London County Council. Some members pleaded earnestly that their constituents deserved the benefit; others said that the fortunate ones who had obtained the benefit of irrigation should be thankful for what they had, and leave the surplus until their neighbours had been supplied—which is rightly the view of the Government.

Having a surplus to dispose of is the key to many things. New roads and railways are being planned; 70,000 new places are being provided in elementary schools for the coming year. The Ministers in the transferred departments are able to justify their position; the elected member is able to go back to his constituents and show that solid things are being done for their benefit. Incidentally in the Punjab the Mohamadan majority in the province is gaining self-respect and beginning to hold its own. The Administration is

strictly impartial between them and the Hindus, but the latter have hitherto had a position which they could not expect to hold permanently against a large Mohamedan majority, with improving material conditions. The Hindu zeal for rapid advance on the road of reform has, I was told, a little abated in this province, for political human nature is not greatly different in India from what it is in Western countries.

The Punjab sets one thinking about the relative positions of Mohamedans and Hindus. To the onlooker it is always something of a mystery that the Mohamedan part of the population should, as one is universally told, be on a lower level educationally than the Hindu. The facts are undoubted : for Hindus the proportion of male literates is 15 per cent., for Mohamedan only 8 per cent. ; and with the higher proportion of literacy goes an ascendancy in material things, which has given a relatively small number of Hindus the predominant power in many Mohamedan communities. Some of this may be ascribed to the Moslem objection to usury, which has left the money-lending and allied trades with their unique hold over the villagers in the hands of the Hindus. But still more perhaps, is due to the fact that the Mohamedan community includes large numbers of converts from the lowest Hindu castes, who have found refuge in Islam from conditions that they found intolerable in the Hindu fold. These provide the main body of converts for both Christians and Moslems, but whereas the Christian missionary devotes himself to the education of his converts, the Moslem so far has neglected that part of his duties, though ability to read and write is supposed to be a religious obligation to the faithful. Thus in effect the Mohamedan community has taken over a considerable number of the most backward

Hindus and done nothing to enable them to improve their condition.

There is undoubtedly an awakening on this subject among the Mohamedans and it is now an avowed object of Moslem reformers to place their co-religionists at least on a level with the Hindus in the matter of education. If this movement goes far, it may enable the Mohamedans to outstrip the Hindus in a good many occupations, and by no means least in agriculture. For, as one sees in the Punjab, a Mohamedan population presents a much simpler problem to the agricultural reformer than a Hindu with its intricate caste system and religious tabus. In the Punjab, one can conceive of an agriculture in which stock-breeding will play the same auxiliary part to cereal cultivation as it does in European countries, whereas in the greater part of India this is cut off by the religious objections to the slaughtering of animals and the eating of meat. In the Punjab, too, the co-operative society and other organizations for mutual help on an equal footing make a readier appeal than in the predominantly Hindu provinces, where the villagers are segregated in their separate castes and can only with great difficulty be persuaded to act together outside their castes.

For these reasons, and most of all for the reason that it has the inestimable advantage of a perennial supply of water from the eternal snows which makes it independent of the variable monsoon, the Punjab is in an exceptionally favourable position. But an energetic policy of development on parallel, if not the same, lines, is possible in other provinces also, and it is to be hoped that the Agricultural Commission will show the way.

CHAPTER XIV

HINDUISM IN PRACTICE

The Two Cells at Benares—The Hindu Synthesis—The Definition of a Hindu—A Chosen Race—Cow-Worship—The Ubiquity of Religion—Religious Ideas and Temple-Worship—From the many to the One—Duties and Obligations—Christian Missions and Their Difficulties—Gandhi and Christianity—Christian Influence on Hinduism—The Educated Hindu and the Missionary—Practical drawbacks of Hinduism—The Network of Custom and Practice—Hinduism and the State.

I

IN one of those little square cells which face the Ganges at Benares and into which one looks with a guilty feeling of intruding on privacy as one floats down the river, I saw an elderly man in a long white robe talking very earnestly to a young one who sat cross-legged on the floor. The walls of the cell were painted white and it was bare of furniture except for a Persian rug on the floor and a small table, with a vase on it containing one lotus flower. The standing figure had a face which strikingly resembled that of a philosophy teacher well known at Oxford in my time, and the young man, though also dressed in white, had a mild and cultured air, and a skin no darker than that of many Europeans. He might have been an Oxford undergraduate reading for "Greats."

In the adjoining cell but separated from it by a partition

wall which prevented the occupant of either from seeing his neighbour, was an enormously fat man naked to the waist, his forehead elaborately painted with yellow caste marks, and blazing red hair streaming down his back. Slung round his neck was a horn and many strings of amber beads. In his lap lay a brass bowl and by his side sat a very dirty child.

The first, I was told, was a famous teacher of the higher Hinduism; the second might have been a medicine man from Central Africa. He was, nevertheless, counted exceedingly holy, and in spite of his vast bulk, was, I was assured, a notable ascetic and mortifier of the flesh. He was also astrologer and horoscope caster, and humble people came to him from all parts of India bringing offerings and asking him to tell their fortunes. His cell was blazoned all over with rough and gaudy paintings, and looked very dirty.

There is a Hindu college or university at Benares which, as an Indian friend told me, is making or trying to make a "synthesis of Hinduism," a synthesis which shall embrace and harmonize these two figures and innumerable others in an ascending or descending scale between them. A few days spent at Benares enables one to understand the nature of this task. That extraordinary scene by the river-side, with its soaring and tumbling temples, its towering Rajah's palaces, its swarms of priests and holy men, its crowds of bathing pilgrims, its burning ghats, its wailing widows and sacred animals, has been described a thousand times, and I can say nothing new about it. No two Europeans appear to be affected in the same way by it. One calls it a place "steeped in prayer," and sees in the crowds who are bathing in the river a "yearning for purification" which is "infinitely touching and mysterious." Another

turns away in disgust and cries out at the "barbarism" which runs riot in this fantastic place. A third tells me seriously that the learned theologians who are at work on the "synthesis" in the Hindu college are more likely than any of their tribe in the world to discover the religion of the future. But he has been reading that fascinating book, "My Brother's Face," and is, I think, a little carried away by it.

All religions have their learned and their popular versions. The gulf between the Bishop of Durham and the Neapolitan peasant who waits for the liquefaction of the blood of St. Januarius is, I suppose, no less than that between the Maharshi Davendranath Tagore and the worshipper of Ganesh in the village temple in India. From the early days of Judaism onwards religious leaders have been engaged in an unceasing struggle to maintain a pure monotheism, and India is certainly not the only country in which the human tendency to add gods to the Pantheon or saints to the Calendar has prevailed. But what is singular to India is the tolerance which the worshippers of the one God appear to extend to the worshippers of the many. Just in proportion as the higher Hinduism spiritualizes and rarefies its conception of the one God, so does the lower multiply its deities and objects of worship.

I have more than once asked learned Brahmins who have explained to me the higher doctrine in the language of Hegelian metaphysics, how it could possibly be reconciled with the innumerable strange cults that one saw in their country. The answer has always been that the true conception of the universal ruling spirit without form or substance was so difficult for ordinary mortals to apprehend that they must be allowed to embody it (and its attributes) in concrete forms. The forms, I

was told, varied according to the levels of culture and education, and some, it was admitted, were less pleasing than others ; but the idea of the one God persisted through all the varieties of worship, and was in essentials more spiritual than the corresponding Western idea ; and accompanied by more philosophical and rational notions of existence than could be found anywhere in the West.

2

I gather that there is much debate among experts as to whether polytheism is inherent in Hinduism or the tolerance of it to be ascribed to a deliberate policy of making things easy for the polytheists whom it absorbed. Reading such books as Davendranath Tagore's Autobiography, Mukerji's "My Brother's Face," or Lord Ronaldshay's delightful studies, I am led to the conclusion that the *Vedas* and the *Upanishads* are like most other scriptures in that the diligent searcher will not fail to find texts in them convenient to his own opinions. But what one wants to know as one travels about India, is not how the learned construe the sacred texts, but what Hinduism actually is to-day for the multitudes of the unlearned.

The extraordinary conglomerate that one sees at Benares of gurus, fakirs, philosophers, priests, astrologers, magicians, medicine men and the accompanying crowds of disciples, pilgrims and votaries is, so far as I have observed, an epitome of all India. One sees it in the mass at Benares ; one sees it in detail in every town and village. What holds it together, what is its common denominator, how in practice does it operate ? It has no Church or General Council to set a standard of orthodoxy or to regulate its practice and belief. The range of its doctrine is from what a European would

call a mystical metaphysic down to what appears to his European eye to be mere fetichism. Yet from the highest to the lowest all who are born to it profess to be of one faith and one way of life, and century after century, even millennium after millennium, this faith and way of life have kept their identity and vitality. No one can doubt that India to-day is by far the most religious country in the world, but whither is its religion tending and what is its effect upon life, conduct and politics ?

3

I cannot answer these questions. I can only set down a few observations that have occurred to me on looking at India.

The supposed legal definition of Hindu as "one who is born a Hindu and worships the cow," needs a great deal of expansion to make it intelligible to a European. Certainly it is a salient point that you cannot become Hindu but must be born to it. That precludes proselytizing. The Mohamedan or the Christian is under a duty to convert the Hindu if he can ; but for a Hindu to bring either Christian or Mohamedan into his exclusive fold would be a presumptuous interference with the divine order which has decreed certain births of Hindus and assigned to each his status according to his previous existences. In order to combat Mohamedan proselytizing Hindus have lately thrown up the theory that Indian Moslems are "unreclaimed" Hindus, who may legitimately be brought back to the fold, but this is as far as their theory can be stretched.

I have thrown a learned Brahmin into great perplexity by asking him how he reconciled with the divine order, as he conceived it, the very large increase of Hindu

births which had taken place under British rule and unquestionably as a consequence of British efforts to keep the peace and combat disease. For that seemed to suggest that it was in the power of British administrators to interfere with the pre-ordained scheme which, according to his theory, determined the number of Hindus at any given moment. His answer was finally that these things were a mystery, but that divine Providence might use British administrators for the furtherance of some scheme which was beyond human knowledge. From his point of view I thought it a good answer ; anyhow he was unshaken in his belief that the number of Hindus was pre-ordained and could not be increased by any human effort which was not contemplated in the divine scheme.

It is impossible that men holding this theory should not regard themselves as belonging to a chosen race, and I think the majority of Hindus do so regard themselves. This leads them, when left to themselves, not only to think of British rule as a temporal and probably temporary affliction, but to consider themselves separate from the rest of the East. Gandhi's attempt to rally them to the Caliphate had only a temporary vogue and was as repugnant to conservative Hindus as is his campaign on behalf of the untouchables. It seems improbable that any leader who attempts to set up a purely Eastern flag in India will meet with much response. Hindus rally not to an Eastern flag but to a Hindu flag ; and conversely the rest of the East has very little sympathy with them, and finds their doctrine and practices almost as puzzling as does the European.

The other part of the definition—that the Hindu worships the cow—is a constant perplexity to the Western mind. When a learned Hindu theologian who has been

discoursing on the Absolute tells you very earnestly that he worships the cow, you have a feeling that he is saying something eccentric. I confessed this frankly to a Hindu friend and he replied with perfect courtesy and simplicity that it was just as puzzling to him that Christians should worship "a piece of bread." He went on to describe his worship of the sacred animal in almost the same terms as a Catholic would describe his adoration of the Sacrament: it was a sacramental way of apprehending the universal creative principle. Possibly in some subconscious way, this is in the mind of the humble Hindu, but with him worship of the cow seems to be compatible with doing anything to it except killing it. He milks it, he works it, he lets it fade into a lean and scranny old age, bearing calves in a condition and at an age which are the despair of those who desire to improve the breed of cattle in India. There are privileged animals attached to the temples, which lead a sleek and garlanded existence and wander about the bazaars, holding up traffic and appropriating green stuff or corn from any stall that takes their fancy. I saw a large Brahminy bull with a garland round its neck reclining at full length on the pavement in front of the principal entrance to the Grand Hotel at Calcutta about three o'clock one afternoon, and when I passed the same spot half an hour later it was still there, and coolies carrying luggage, guests going in and out of the hotel, and foot passengers in the street, were all carefully walking round it, so as not to disturb its repose. But it and its kind are a favoured minority; for all the rest the theory that they are sacred has somehow to be squared with the practical necessity which requires them to be yoked and milked, to sustain life and perform menial services for those who are supposed to worship them.

So it is with all the other innumerable animals and things that are "worshipped" in one part of India or another. Life must go on, and if they were railed off from profane uses, it would come to a standstill. The sacred tank has to be used for washing clothes and watering animals; the sacred tree must provide litter and fuel, even the sacred Ganges must drain the city of Benares. The deities become extremely familiar; with ordinary folk there is none of the awe which in Western countries shuts off the sacred from the profane. Religion is everywhere and in everything, and that it should be so is accepted as a self-evident fact about life. Hindus joke about their gods and tell Homeric stories about the divine heroes. The village temple is the centre not only of devotional life but of gaieties and festivities. I asked an official friend to tick off for me on his calendar the number of Hindu festivals in the year and he said that they were 115 in number, i.e., more than two in the week the whole year through. There are more and less important, but on most of them, work is reduced to a minimum all over the countryside. Some are great romps and jollities in which old and young play practical jokes on each other. Even a European has to walk warily lest he be squirted on the days of the Holi.

4

The European is tempted to say that it is all pure paganism, quite jolly and agreeable and natural to the children of the East, but making nonsense of the claims of the higher Hinduism. He would, nevertheless, be wrong. Behind these appearances there are religious ideas of great value and interest. "The presiding Lord of the Temple," says an Indian who writes with rare

charm and sympathy about his own people, "reveals a stage in the evolution of the Hindu conception of God. He supplies the impulse which gives the artistic unity to the scattered and individual traditions of the temple. He keeps the satellites in their proper orbits. An idea of service to humanity, of liberation from suffering, is the key-note of every temple—a conception of love and service petrified into an idol and varied with multitudinous faces. When the evening bells go out on their wavy roll in air, the mud-stained labourer in the field, the mother at home and the children who play hide-and-seek in the court-yard all lift their eyes and hands to the gold-tipped summit of the gopuram (pagoda) now radiant in the soft-spreading evening light. For the sight of the gopuram at this hour is the sight of the gods."¹

It may be noted that "God" in the first of these passages becomes "gods" in the second, and this is characteristic of Hinduism. The Hindu passes from the One to the Many and back again from the Many to the One in a manner which shocks the Western theologian but is natural and innocent to him. The more important point is that he has somewhere in his mind a theory of existence which does, as this writer says, give unity to the scattered and individual traditions of the temple and which contains within itself the idea of love and service. Whether it is service to "humanity" as he claims it, or service to Hindus is a more difficult question. I have tried in talking to Hindus to discover what is their conception of "humanity" outside the Hindu fold, and have never succeeded in getting a clear answer or one which was clear to myself. Is the rest of human-

¹ "Paper Boats," by K. S. Venkataramani (Ganesh & Co., Madras). See especially the chapter on the Hindu Temple.

ity out-caste, as on the strict theory of the matter it would seem to be? The Hindu with whom a European converses is either too charitable or too polite to push his theory to this logical extreme and he leaves it, as the Roman Catholic does when asked to say that there is no salvation outside the Church, to the tender mercies of divine Providence.

But within the Hindu fold there is no doubt. This religion instils into its adherents ideas of kindness and mutual obligation and self-sacrifice which often leave a European ashamed. No Hindu can live for himself alone. From the beginning of his life to the end he is bound up in obligations to his family and his caste which he does not dream of repudiating and could not repudiate without being ostracized by his fellows. Dharma and Karma; Dharma, as Sir Valentine Chirol says, binding the Hindu to perfect his Karma by the assiduous fulfilment of his duties within and towards the caste into which he has been born, are real and vivid spiritual ideas to the humblest peasant.

Caste has innumerable drawbacks and so, from a material and economic point of view, have the family obligations. But both have immense saving graces. India acting up to her faith dispenses altogether with a poor-law, though she is one of the poorest countries in the world. And India does really believe in some characteristic Christian doctrines in a manner in which no European Christian believes in them. She does really believe that one man can take on him the sins of the many, and is thrilled when Gandhi "purifies the nation" by fasting. She has a real reverence for sanctity and self-sacrifice, strange and even repulsive to the European as are some of the forms which these virtues take in India. She does really think of religion as something

penetrating and informing the whole of life ; she has an idea of the evolution of the spiritual life which takes it out of time and redeems it from the chances and perils of a single brief existence.

5

It is these very vivid and active beliefs that the Christian missionary encounters in his attempt to convert the Hindu to the Christian faith. Christianity, as the Hindu sees it practised by Europeans, seems but a pale dilution of the religion that he believes in. There would of course, in any case, be great practical difficulties in the way of converting the higher caste Hindus, for the convert not only changes his religion, but is taken bodily out of the scheme of life in which he has his fixed place, and must be resettled in new and alien conditions. This necessarily throws the missionary back for the most part on the "untouchables," who have no caste to lose and gain a new status by becoming Christians. For these, or for such of them as do not accept their condition in the penitential Hindu spirit, the Christian missionary does a very real and a most humane work, but to the vast majority of the remainder he seems to be bringing an Eastern religion in a Western garb which has despiritualized it and made it unintelligible.

The educated Hindu is strongly convinced of the superiority of his religious ideas and is aggrieved when the missionary speaks of "converting the heathen." "You missionaries," said Mr. Gandhi, at a Missionary Conference that he attended in Calcutta (July 18, 1925), "come to India thinking that you come to a land of heathens, of idolaters, of men who do not know the true meaning of religion. One of the greatest of Christian divines, Bishop Heber, allowed himself to write

those two lines which have always left a sting upon me—'Every prospect pleases, but only man is vile.' I wish he had not written those lines. From my experience of the masses of India, he is not vile, he is just as much a seeker after God as you or I are, possibly more so."

Gandhi on the same occasion touched on another aspect of Christian missions, which is always in the mind of Indian Nationalists. "The missionaries," he said, "come under the shadow or, if you like, the protection of a temporal power, and it creates an impossible bar. If you give me statistics to show that so many orphans have been brought to Christianity, so many grown-up people, I will accept them, but I do not feel convinced thereby that that is your mission. In my humble opinion your mission is infinitely superior. You want to find the man in India, and if you want to do that, you will have to go to the lowly cottages, not to give them something, but probably to take something. I miss that receptivity, I miss that humility, that ability, that willingness on your part to identify yourselves with the masses of India." This is put more explicitly by others who complain openly that the missionary is the instrument of the civil power and the pioneer of the trader.

All generalizations are unfair. Men like Father Douglas of the Oxford Mission are doing their work with all the humility, charity and sympathy that Gandhi could desire, and whatever the number of their converts, India is the better for their presence. There are hundreds of men and women all over the country engaged in medical and social work which is absolutely indispensable, and Indians would do well to follow their example. I could speak of others whom I know and

have seen, such as the Metropolitan of the Anglican Church, who are greatly beloved and respected by Indians. Through these in their several spheres the influence of Christianity is brought to bear upon Hinduism, and most Hindus would, I think, acknowledge that it is a good influence. But when young men and women go out, as they say, to convert the "heathen," they would do well to remember that "the heathen" include highly educated men with deeply religious minds who have a philosophy and theology of their own which they seriously believe to be a truer and more acceptable doctrine than any that Christianity can offer them.

"I do not profess Christianity to-day," said Gandhi in the speech from which I have already quoted, "and I am here in all humility to tell you that for me Hinduism, as I find it, entirely satisfies my soul, fills my whole being and that I find a solace in the *Bhagavad-Gita* and in the *Upanishads* that I miss even in the Sermon on the Mount. When disappointment stares me in the face and all alone I see not one ray of light, I go back to the *Bhagavad-Gita*; I find a verse here and a verse there and I immediately begin to smile in the midst of overwhelming tragedies—and my life has been full of external tragedies—and if they have left no visible and no indelible scar upon me, I owe it all to the teachings of the *Bhagavad-Gita*."

This is a profession of faith which scores of thousands of educated Hindus would make to-day, and to them the approach of the missionary who thinks of them as pagan idolaters or as heathens walking in darkness, is very near an insult. Some of them take up the challenge and carry the war into the Christian camp with a full armoury of critical weapons. A very distinguished man, with whom I talked on these subjects, launched out into

an elaborate comparison of the Hindu and the Christian conceptions of God, and told me finally that he could make no terms with a religion which presented the Old Testament as inspired scripture. I asked him whether the *Vedas* and *Upanishads* were not open to the same objections, but he replied warmly that nothing which reflected on the highest and most spiritual conception of God was binding on a Hindu, whereas a large number of Christians were actually in bondage to the Old Testament-anthropomorphic idea of God, and would be, so long as the Old Testament ranked as an inspired book. For his own part, he said, he delighted in the sayings of Christ, and found no difficulty in absorbing them into his own religion, but it was his deliberate opinion that, as an explanation of existence and reality, Christian theology was inferior to Hindu.

6

The speaker was an exponent of the higher Hinduism, and was an ardent reformer of his own religion. I think he would have admitted a great deal of what the Western observer alleges against Hinduism as he sees it in operation—its superstitions, its tabus, its innumerable dividing lines and complications; the priest-ridden and Brahmin-ridden condition of immense numbers of its adherents; the fatalism and passivity which it encourages; the low view of womankind which follows almost inevitably from its idea of the functions of the son of the family. Important as it is to understand the great redeeming ideas which lie behind them, these practices and beliefs, pursued and entertained by the vast majority of Hindus, are a desperate* perplexity to the onlooker who thinks of India in terms of Western progress. They seem to be fatal to anything that can be called

democracy and hard to reconcile with what the European calls nationality. How shall men—let alone women—who are brought up to think of themselves as in innumerable little pens and obtaining salvation by strict observance of the laws, customs and boundaries of each separate pen, be welded together in any whole ; how can they even grasp the idea of equal values, equal votes, equal rights which is at the root of Western democracy ?

It may be answered that the conception of Hindus as a chosen people who are one spiritual community does in some sort provide a substitute for the political notion of nationality, and that Hinduism does at certain times and in certain places put off caste and acknowledge that all men are one before God. There are festivals in which this theory rules and holy places where the Brahmin is supposed to be of no more account than the untouchable.¹ These answers have been made to me by learned Hindus ; and Hinduism, no doubt, like all working religions, has ways of escape from its own logic and theory. What it cannot escape from, or escape only with great difficulty, is the network of custom and practice which almost everywhere trips up Indians or Europeans who set about improving India in the Western way. For the British administrator it has almost inevitably become a rule that nothing must be done which offends religion ; and though Indian politicians commonly reproach us with the backwardness of India which results from this attitude, it remains to be seen whether they themselves will be in a better plight.

Let me give a concrete example. I have been out with a very enlightened Indian among his villages and seen his people at work on their holdings. Some of them are Jains and nearly all the rest Mahajas, none of whom

¹ Puri, I believe, is one of the cities in which caste is suspended.

will kill any living thing. He tells me that he calculates that on the average they gather in not more than a third of what they grow. One third goes to pigs, deer, panthers and monkeys ; another third to birds and insects. They will not kill the cobra, even when it has bitten them ; they will not kill the rat or the flea on the rat which carries the infection of plague. When I asked my servant to see that my bed was clear of mosquitoes, he caught them one by one, and took them very delicately in the tips of his fingers to the window and let them out. I do not say that this is typical of all India, but it certainly is of very large parts of it.

One may feel a certain sympathy with the spirit which regards the whole animal creation as in one brotherhood with man and subject to the same spiritual laws, but carried to these extremes, it is the despair of the agricultural reformer. One goes about India and sees the cultivator cheerfully providing sustenance for great birds, tribes of monkeys and other animals nearly as big as man and much more voracious, who give him no return and often do damage out of all proportion to what they consume. The country, therefore, has to provide from its primitive agriculture for a vastly greater population than appears on the census returns ; and the cultivator submits to damage and depredation which he would not tolerate for a moment if perpetrated by human beings. It is only Indians who can change these conditions, and whatever Agricultural Commissions may recommend, the practical work must be done at their instigation or at least with their co-operation.

This is only one example of the numerous ways in which religious scruple or caste prejudice impedes reform. One cannot try to ascertain the facts about any little groups without discovering that the priestly system takes a

heavy toll from very poor people, that caste is a serious obstacle to what Europeans call organization; that religious tabus greatly impede the work of the medical and health officer. The widespreading tolerance which Hindus extend to miscellaneous beliefs has saved them from the horrors which have attended religious reformations in Western countries but has left Hinduism for the most part unreformed. There are, I know, very important movements at work for its reformation, but these, so far, have been mainly confined to the literates of the towns, and their object has been to find a new inspiration for Indian Nationalism in an idealized version of the old faith. The practical work of harmonizing that faith with things that are urgent for the material welfare of the mass of the people has still to be done and it can only be done by Indians.

In the meantime, India, thanks to its religion, presents the spectacle of a complete social organism governed by its own rules and customs existing independently of, and to a large extent outside the sphere of the State.¹ The self-sufficiency of this organism and its belief in a spiritual government transcending any other explains its tolerance of alien rule but also makes it extremely difficult for the alien ruler to identify himself with its life or to perform the services for it which Western peoples expect from their rulers. Fundamentally the case for Indian Home Rule rests on this radical fact.

¹ See on this subject Sir Valentine Chirol's admirable book on India in "The Modern World" Series, p. 33.

CHAPTER XV

A VISIT TO RABINDRANATH TAGORE

At Santiniketan—A Model School—Painting and Music—Tagore's Songs—Class-Rooms under the Trees—An Evening Hymn—Education Poetical and Practical—A Research Department—The Agricultural Village—A Practical Visionary—The Indian Background—Qualities of the Bengali—Injured Feelings and the Consequences.

I

AT Bolpur—about 100 miles from Calcutta—the Bengal plain spreads around one like the sea, and the sun beats on it from a cloudless sky. There are no hedges or boundaries and the predominant earth colour is a pale brown, but there is life and cultivation everywhere. Trees abound and a vivid green banana grove stands out in the distance against a dark screen of mangoes. There are large tanks in the hollows and brown-legged peasants lift the water from level to level in iron scoops attached to bamboo hoists. Bullock-carts are crossing the flat in all directions with little parties of men, women and children trotting in attendance. The women are swathed in white with a rose-coloured or orange scarf about their shoulders; the little children are generally as Nature made them, their brown skins burnished in the sunlight. There is a perpetual chatter of birds and the trill of the big kites breaks in on the chorus of the crows.

Sixty years ago this country was infested with dacoits,

and it is related that the famous Maharshi Davendranath Tagore (father of the poet), halting to meditate in a grove of chatini trees, was set upon by a gang of them, who were about to rob and kill him, when their hearts were so touched by the beauty and sanctity of his face that they not only spared him, but became his devoted disciples. Under the trees is a simple marble monument, commemorating the occasion and recording the mystic's thought :

He is the repose of my life
He is the joy of my heart
He is the peace of my soul.

Within a hundred yards of this spot Davendranath Tagore built a large house and settled down with his family ; and twenty-five years ago his famous son, Rabindranath the poet and writer, founded the colony known as Santiniketan (the Abode of Peace) on the adjoining estate. Here my wife and I had the great pleasure of spending three days with him and his fellow-workers.

The colony is first of all a school for boys and girls, who are educated together. This deliberately cuts across Indian tradition and sentiment, and might be disastrous if it were not in expert hands. Here it is perfectly successful. There are separate hostels for boys and girls, the girls living in a three-storied house, the boys in the long low bungalows which are scattered about between the trees. The class-rooms are mainly the open air ; the children sit cross-legged in circles under the trees, the teacher at one end, with his maps or diagrams hanging from a bough. They make delightful groups in their white tunics and coloured scarves ; all the faces seem eager and intelligent, and many of them are strikingly handsome. For half an hour I sat listening to an

English lesson, and was struck with the ease with which they read and their quickness in catching the accent and intonation. They seemed to be quite unembarrassed by my presence and completely at their ease with their teacher, who spoke and read English perfectly. From that I passed to a geography lesson which, for my benefit, the teacher changed from Bengali to English, and to all appearances, without in the least disturbing the flow of his instruction.

There is a power-house close by, which serves the double purpose of lighting the colony and instructing the boys in the handling of the plant, and adjoining it is a carpenter's shop, where they make most of the furniture and do the necessary repairs, under the instruction of their teachers. Across the road is the art school and library, a building of two stories, with a large open veranda above the porch. All who have the slightest aptitude are encouraged to draw, and taught to paint in water-colours. There is no hard-and-fast curriculum; boys and girls follow their own bent, draw any figure or object which strikes their fancy, and bring the results to be criticized by the master. They provided me with paper, paints and brushes and sat me down to sketch with a group of watchful critics looking over my shoulder. It was terrifying to me, but perfectly natural to them, and presently they began running back to their rooms and bringing little bundles of their own drawings for me to criticize. Some of these seemed to me extremely interesting and original. One or two had copied European models, but most followed the Indian style, figures and simple objects being drawn in sharp outline, and fitted into a design which had been imposed on the subject.

Within the school the art lesson was going on to an accompaniment of music. The pupils sat cross-

legged with their drawing-boards on the floor in front of them, while a lad of about eighteen with a charming tenor voice, sang Bengali songs and accompanied himself on a richly-carved zither. The music is at first a little strange to the Western ear, but that quickly wears off, and then one gets the sense of rare and fascinating rhythms which seem to be an extension of speech rather than an art apart from it. Rabindranath Tagore is as much musician as poet ; he has provided the music for more than a hundred of his own songs ; he sings them beautifully himself, and they are known and sung all over Bengal. Unfortunately this music is passed on without being written down, and like the poetry, most of which is untranslated, it is unknown outside India. But one hears it everywhere at Santiniketan, for in this place everyone sings, and music is literally one of the foundations of education. The day opens with song and ends with song. Morning and evening little parties of boys and girls take it in turn to walk up and down the beautiful avenue of stal trees singing the morning and evening hymns.

One of the evening hymns has fortunately been translated by Mr. Edward Thompson, and if the reader will think of it as sung to an Indian melody in the twilight under the trees, he will catch a little of the atmosphere which the poet has woven about this place.

In my evening Thou hast come, in beautiful raiment,
I salute Thee.

In the heart of the darkness Thou hast laughed ;
I salute Thee.

In this downcast, still deep, placid sky,
I salute Thee.

On the grassy couch of this tired earth
I salute Thee.

In this silent incantation of the steadfast stars
I salute Thee.

In the lonely rest house at work's end
I salute Thee.

In the flowery garland of the fragrant evening sky
I salute Thee.

Every season has its songs ; songs of the spring, songs of the summer, songs of the rains, and these too are sung by the children at the appointed times. And finally there are the poet's plays interspersed with dance and song, which are carefully rehearsed and acted two or three times a year. It is certainly not the fault of their teachers if the children who pass through this school do not come out of it with their imaginations kindled and their tastes refined.

2

Indeed, after staying in this place for three days, I see it as the nearest embodiment in existence to-day of the Platonic idea of the education of youth. Tagore has not consciously borrowed from Plato ; he has followed his own road to a conclusion which is above all things Indian and Bengali, but the same thought is in his mind—the thought of the unconscious effect of beautiful sights and sounds upon the growing intelligence, and their power to subdue it to the useful and the good. It is difficult to express this in any language which does not sound affected and sentimental, especially to those accustomed to the robust methods of the English public schools ; and its virtue lies entirely in its being un-self-conscious and unexpressed. This Tagore contrives by his own presence and influence, an influence which is as strongly practical on one side as it is poetical on the other.

These boys and girls, in fact, are being trained in every possible way to be useful and active citizens. By an ingenious arrangement the older girls take charge of the little boys of the junior school, and thereby learn a great deal that is useful in mothering and home-keeping. All are taught what is called domestic science, and will presently, it is hoped, help to spread this much-needed knowledge in the villages of Bengal. The boys, meanwhile, are having the scout spirit instilled into them in a manner which would rejoice the heart of General Baden-Powell. The neighbouring villages are grouped round the settlement, and boys are sent into them to deal with their emergencies and organize their sports and amusements. When cholera broke out in one of them last year they went in and cleaned out the place and purified its water. All this means a break with caste and custom which can with difficulty be realized by the European. Among the boys are sons of Brahmins, who bring with them from their homes all the pride and prejudice of their caste. They are left absolutely free to go their own way and nothing ostensible is done to break down their exclusiveness. If they choose to have their meals apart, it is permitted, and some of them do for the first few weeks after their arrival. But the spirit of the place gradually kills the pride of the little Brahmin, and after this beginning he settles down with the rest and learns to be an equal among equals. The Santiniketan teachers do not inveigh against caste; they are content to teach a way of life in which caste prejudices seem absurd and inhuman.

But at Santiniketan the school is not everything. Joined up with it is a research department for adult students, presided over by the learned Pandit Vidhushekar Bhattacharya, who is engaged in deciphering ancient

Sanskrit texts written on palm leaves, and who shares his study with another famous scholar, who is at work on a Sanskrit dictionary. This department has a reputation outside India, and two Italian professors from the University of Rome were pursuing their studies there at the time of my visit. I listened one evening to a learned and eloquent theme delivered by one of them to the teachers and students of the colony. Metaphysical subtleties which out-Hegel Hegel are commonly discussed in this circle, and the plain man from the West quickly finds his brain spinning in a whirl of Indian terminology which the pandits handle with a terrible familiarity. I will not try to plumb these depths ; sufficient to say that the search for the ultimate reality is pursued indefatigably at all hours of the day and night by these ardent spirits.

The Agricultural Research Department, another branch of the colony, swings back to the practical. This bears the name of Sriniketan (the Abode of Energy), and is situated a mile away, in and around the village of Sural. Here is an experimental farm and vegetable garden, with technical schools in spinning and tanning for the instruction of the villagers. Professor Gangulee, Tagore's son-in-law, who has done so much to prepare the way for the Agricultural Commission lately appointed, was at work in this place for a year or more, and to look at it is to see what he and other Indian agricultural reformers have in mind. The farm has the special object of showing the villagers of this district what can be grown on their own sandy soil and how their methods may be improved. There are model growths of cotton, rice, pineapple, bananas, ginger and various other plants which are being tested for their suitability to this part of Bengal. There is also a stock-farm for improving the breed of cows and buffaloes, and a delight-

ful Japanese gardener is showing how vegetables and flowers should be grown. I cannot speak as an expert, but on all hands I have heard the highest tributes paid to the practical value of this work and to the disinterested zeal of the men who are carrying it on. They have great difficulties to overcome—the apathy of the peasant, the objection of the landed class to experiments which break in upon the old ways, the eternal problem of finance, which is only to be solved when the self-supporting basis is reached. That is hoped for after another year or two years, but pioneers are sanguine, and there are unforeseen trials and aberrations of nature which defeat the best intentions even of scientific agriculturists.

Certainly at Santiniketan, if anywhere, the “practical visionary” is seen at work. You pass from dreamland into reality at a turn of the road, and back again into dreamland at the next turning. The special quality of this place is the combination of the two things and the correction of the one by the other. One trembles a little to think how it could go on and this delicate balance be maintained, if the presiding genius were removed. He sits in the centre of it—a gracious and picturesque personality, his flowing locks falling over his blue robe, the very personification of the poet as the painter would wish him to be. All here are his devoted servants and hang on his lips as he discourses of loving-kindness and homely duties or plunges deep into the mysteries of the Divine Being and its manifestations in art and nature. I shall always think of him as sitting in his great chair in the large open portico of his house at Santiniketan, with the Indian sunlight playing on the walls behind him.

Tagore is a citizen of the world, and though his work is Indian all through, he has none of the Oriental vanity

which eschews European aid. There were residents of all nations in the colony when I visited it, and among his principal coadjutors have been Mr. and Mrs. L. K. Elmshirst who have generously given both time and money, and Mr. C. F. Andrews who is unfailing in his services to the people of India. At the moment of my visit Andrews was in South Africa pleading the cause of the Indian immigrant, and I missed the pleasure of seeing him again. I have heard that some of our countrymen consider his zeal excessive and even go to the length of calling him "seditious." That is a word too easily used in this country. If there were more men of Andrews's quick imagination and warm heart to bridge the gulf between English and Indian, we should be nearer the much desired co-operation between the two peoples. In the meantime nothing could be more serviceable than his co-operation with Tagore.

3

I have dwelt at some length upon the work at Santiniketan in the hope that it may show what the finest spirits in India are capable of doing on their own initiative. There is unfortunately only one Santiniketan, and, so far as Europe knows, only one Tagore. But the experiment is on sufficient scale to show capacities which must be latent in large parts of India. One sees in this colony boys and girls drawn without any special selection from all classes, who prove to be exceptionally gifted, according to any European standard, who are highly sensitive to art and beauty, and quick and versatile in their intelligence. They and their teachers seem to be peculiarly interested in speculations which would be altogether bewildering to an English schoolboy, and they live against a background of myth, mysticism and poetry

which the same schoolboy would consider to be a tissue of nonsense.

This Indian background is just what it is so hard for the prosaic European to realize. Either he ignores it and so misses a great deal of the essential truth, or—in exceptional cases—falls into a sentimental ecstasy about it, which is equally wide of the mark. One must try to think of it as something natural and pervasive, having deep religious and communal roots. It is customary to divide the people of India into literates and illiterates—those who can and those who cannot write—and to treat the three hundred millions or more of the latter as children requiring tutelage and incapable of consecutive thought or action on their own account. Tagore will not have it so. He dwells on the “wonderful system of mass education which has prevailed for ages in India,” and which through poetry and oral tradition has made large numbers of Indian peasants extremely susceptible to art and beauty and capable of subtle and wise thinking. In a recent essay he has collected specimens of the songs sung by the village poets in East Bengal, and they are extraordinarily interesting. The village poet is a sort of Lucretius singing of the nature of things and their mystery :

Nobody can tell whence the bird unknown
Comes into the cage and goes out,
I would fain put round its feet the fetter of my mind
Could I but capture it.

Alas, a jeweller has come into the flower garden,
He wants to appraise the truth of a lotus
By rubbing it against his touchstone.

At other times the form is dramatic, and “under a tattered canopy held on bamboo poles and lighted by a

few kerosene lamps the village crowd, occasionally interrupted by howls of jackals in the neighbouring paddy-fields, attends till the small hours of the morning. the performance of a drama that discusses the ultimate meaning of all things in a seemingly incongruous setting of dance, music, and humorous dialogue."

The British-Indian quarrel is spiritual and intellectual even more than political, and it has spread outwards from Bengal, where the clash of temperaments is specially marked. The Bengalis have been called the Italians of India, but they might equally well be called its Celts. Mr. Yeats would be at home in Bengal, and if the gulf of language could be bridged, he would find entranced audiences for his poems and plays in almost any Bengal village. Unfortunately the qualities which make mystics and poets also make orators and politicians, and behind the politics are grievances for which there is no political remedy. The prevalent fashion which in the last thirty years has made the Bengali the butt of English sarcasm has been a very expensive joke for us. There are undoubtedly some very absurd Bengalis. An out-of-work Babu came to my carriage window at Howrah station, Calcutta, and recited his woes in terms which no parodist could improve upon. Orators essaying high flights of eloquence in the English tongue make delicious mistakes which would be a sin to leave unrecorded.¹ The Bengali has, I think, enough sense of humour not to resent our appreciation of these things when the joke is explained to him. But it is more than a joke to him that contempt and sarcasm should be poured out on his entire nation, that his virtues should be forgotten and his foibles derided, and that he should be perpetually contrasted, to his dis-

¹ So also do Englishmen making speeches in the vernacular, but Indians think it bad manners to notice these things.

advantage, with the primitive and "virile" tribes of the north.

This has entered deeply into the soul of the more gifted members of the race. They feel aggrieved and insulted, and cry out against the crude judgment which so little respects their feelings and has so little understanding of their civilization and culture. They contrast the heavy utilitarianism of the ruling Power with their own subtle and mystical conception of life, and vow that this shall not be destroyed by any incursion of Western progress. I have heard this feeling expressed by men who take little interest in politics, and who honestly desire to be on good terms with the British Raj. These are content to work in their own way for what they think to be the good of India. But among the politicians, and especially the younger ones, the reaction is more violent; and the constant taunt that they are lacking in virility has, I am convinced, been a powerful contributing cause to the criminal side of their movement. Young men of fiery temperament, who constantly hear their courage questioned, are easily put on their mettle to prove that they are capable of both killing and dying.

It is an ominous fact that the Bengal seditionist delights in Irish analogies, and no Englishman can be long in Bengal without having the parallel uncomfortably brought home to him. The differences of course, are many, but the clash of race and temperament is strikingly similar, and the Bengali way of life is in the same sort of conflict with British official methods as the Irish was with the methods of Dublin Castle. There is the same compound of mysticism, poetry, squalor and beggary in Bengal as in Ireland, and the defects of the Bengali have the same irritating effect upon the British official as those of the Irish.

In what I have written I have endeavoured to give the Bengali point of view, since it is of vital importance to the whole Indian problem. There are undoubtedly some awkward realities over which the poets and writers draw a veil, but unless we make an honest attempt to enter into the wounded feelings that lie behind the political agitation of which Bengal is the centre we shall not be in the way to deal with it wisely.

CHAPTER XVI

A VISIT TO GANDHI

A Person Politically Dead—Gandhi the Saint—His Fasts—The Guru and His Chelas—Views about Tactics—The Atmosphere of Suspicion—The Poverty of India and the Remedy—Spinning—The Prohibition of Foreign Goods—The South African Problem—Swadeshi and Colour-bar—Hindu and Mohamedan.

I

IN my library hangs one of "F. C. G.'s" most famous cartoons. It belongs to the year 1896, and represents Mr. Gladstone in his own words, as "a person politically dead." The "person politically dead" holds one pen in his mouth as he writes with another. His desk is strewn with papers, notes for speeches, memoranda about the Armenian question, advice to leaders and candidates, and so forth. His eyes burn, every hair on his head is on end. Readers whose memory goes back to this time will remember that these activities caused a certain embarrassment to Mr. Gladstone's "politically alive" successors, Lord Rosebery and Sir William Harcourt.

The memory of this cartoon came back to me as I drove from Ahmedabad, along the banks of the Sabarmati River, to see another famous man, who also, according to his own account, is "politically dead." This is Mahatma Gandhi, who after a stormy period, in the

course of which the Viceroy thought it necessary to intern him for his own welfare and that of India, has announced that he has gone into seclusion and renounced politics for the ascetic and contemplative life, at least for the period of a year. Mr. Gandhi may announce what he likes, but he permeates the Indian scene precisely as Mr. Gladstone did the British, whether he was technically on or off the political stage. All talk with Indian Nationalists comes back to Gandhi. If they cannot act with him they dare not defy him; what he thinks, what he will do next, and whether he may not dish them by some sudden and unexpected move are disturbing thoughts which none of them can suppress.

I speak the language of mundane politics, but something else must be added. In the eyes of the politicians, as of all India, Gandhi is a saint. Saints may be very vexatious people, but they are still saints, and Gandhi's hold over his countrymen is that of a man of a spotless and self-immolating character, who stands on a moral altitude which none of his fellow-beings have attained. In India such a character is unchallengeable, and its influence beyond any political foot-rule. There were cynics in England who challenged Mr. Gladstone's sainthood; there are none in India to challenge Mr. Gandhi's. I have been told that Mr. Gandhi is a spent force, that three years ago he wielded a greater power than any man since Buddha, and now is nothing. This is not the view of the Indian politicians, who manifestly walk in awe of him, and I do not think it is a view which should be lightly accepted by the Government.

If one could only fathom Gandhi's relationship to the Indian people, much would be made clear that is now dark and baffling to the European observer. All the circumstances surrounding him are to the European

eye singular, not to say eccentric. As we approach his place of retreat, I ask my Indian guide about his health, and say I have read with concern that it has been failing of late. He says that happily it is now mending, and explains the circumstances of his recent illness. Something had gone wrong in the little community which has gathered about him in his retreat, and to repair the mischief Gandhi had undertaken one of his fasts. It had been a little too prolonged, and his health had suffered in consequence, but the spiritual effect had been all that was desired, and he was now recovering. The explanation was given in a purely matter-of-fact way, as if the sequence of cause and effect was self-evident.

Gandhi is always fasting when things go wrong, and all India is thrilled when the news goes out that he is fasting. Supposing it were announced in the newspapers that Mr. Baldwin had declined his food and turned his face to the wall and refused to get out of bed when the miners threatened to go out on strike, or Lord Birkenhead was making trouble in the Cabinet, we should have the nearest parallel I can think of. It sounds ridiculous, but India does really believe in the mystical efficacy of this vicarious penance; and that the atmosphere will somehow be cleansed and the higher powers propitiated when Gandhi offers himself as a sacrifice for others is the belief of multitudes in India to-day.

2

As we drive up to the *Ashram*, Gandhi is being weighed, and his disciples are gathered round making careful notes of the result. My friend explains this to me in the same matter-of-fact way, and we pass on into the little white-washed chamber where the Mahatma works and meditates, and there after a few minutes he

joins us. I had hoped for a private talk—even at the cost of not being able to report it—but his friends follow and sit round in a circle, with my wife and myself at one end. He is in the garb of an ascetic, i.e., not garbed at all except for a spreading loin-cloth. He comes in with a light step, almost running, a lithe and animated figure radiating cheerfulness and benevolence, and seats himself cross-legged on the ground, with a low desk covered with books and pamphlets in front of him. The scene was the strangest mixture of the real and the impossible. He spoke perfect English without a trace of accent and in an absolutely English political way. Shutting one's eyes one could suppose oneself listening to an extremely accomplished English politician; opening them one saw an Indian *guru* nearly naked, surrounded by his *chelas*, who plainly regarded every word that fell from him as an inspired utterance. Inside, the room was cool and shaded, but the blistering sun outside made the *guru's* costume natural and enviable.

We began about the Swarajist tactics of "walking out" of the Assembly at Delhi. I had been told that he disapproved and would probably have something interesting to say. He said simply that he had been against going in, but that those who had gone in would probably judge better than he could about the timeliness or otherwise of going out. A mistake? Possibly, but politics were built up of mistakes, and politicians got their experience by honest mistakes. The Pandit Motilal Nehru, like his predecessor, C. R. Das, was a very devoted and self-sacrificing man. He had given up great wealth, put down his motor-cars, let his beautiful garden run to seed from pure zeal in the cause of India. The actions of such a man had a value which placed them beyond ordinary criticism. If he was wrong—which

he did not say—he had earned the right of making his own mistakes. And so the subject passed.

I said it seemed to me a pity that there was so much suspiciousness on the Indian side of British policy and action in India. From our point of view we had made great advances, and they seemed to be met with perpetual hostility and imputation of motives which we knew to be untrue.

Yes, it might seem so to me, but I did not know the other side. There was the same suspiciousness and tendency to impute motives on our side. We, too, had failed to enter into the Indian mind. This lack of charity and understanding was a great pity, but if it was to be mended it must be mended on both sides.

I said that except in the newspapers and in public speeches I thought it was mending. Wherever I had been, I had found much greater friendliness and forbearance between Europeans and Indians than when I was here last.

Certainly he thought that was true, and it gave ground for hope. I was not to think that he had any unfriendly feeling towards the British as such. Some of his best friends were Englishmen. There were good Englishmen and bad Englishmen, just as there were good Indians and bad Indians. The distinctions he made were not racial but moral. But as an Indian he thought of India, of her poverty, her sufferings and her unhappiness.

The theme was richly developed. As an Indian he should not have complained if we had brought happiness and prosperity to India by our Western methods. But we had broken up her ancient ways and not been able to replace them by ways of our own. Her population had multiplied but was poorer than ever. The cause of India's discontent was her poverty, and her poverty was due to the inroads which modern industry had made.

upon the life of her villages. Formerly the villages were self-supporting and all the villagers were employed throughout the year. Now most of them were unemployed for four months in the year, and this meant great misery and unhappiness.

What was the remedy? It was simple if only people would grasp it. They must go back to the old ways and learn to make for themselves what they were now buying. In one word, they must "spin." The four months of agricultural unemployment must be devoted to spinning, and to set the example everyone must spin. On the floor by Gandhi's desk was a spinning-wheel, in every corner of the *Asbham* was a spinning-wheel; in every corner of the adjacent college was a spinning-wheel. Gandhi himself does his portion every day; every member of his little community, every professor, every teacher, every student has his wheel and sits at it for an hour or more every day, producing a certain measured quantity of "cloth." In this way it is supposed that the example is spread, and a spinning atmosphere, if one may so speak, is diffused from this *Asbham* all over India.

I hinted a doubt whether so simple a specific could fit what seemed to me the very diverse conditions of the villages of India. For instance, one might be near a town, where the people might get more lucrative employment than spinning during the four months; or another might be in the area of public works; or a third might be in need of wells or drainage or better houses or other means of increasing the comfort of the inhabitants which would pay them better than spinning, if their labour could be properly directed.

Gandhi brushed these objections aside. In appealing to the masses one must think of something simple which applied to the vast majority of cases, and spinning had

this advantage over all specifics. Warming to his subject, he said that if he could have his way, he would from this moment prohibit the importation of a single yard of foreign "cloth," whether from Lancashire, Japan or any other country.

3

From where we sat we looked across the Sabarmati River to the lines of tall chimneys which marked the sites of the great cotton mills of Ahmedabad. These too, it seemed, would have to be closed down if the spinning specific were universal. After all it was a mere accident that some of the machine-made cloth came from Lancashire and some from Ahmedabad. Gandhi's objection was to the machine product, which had destroyed the ancient life of the Indian village; and if he had his way about cloth, one saw him going on to the pottery and the hardware and other miscellaneous products of European and Indian factories, which filled the bazaars and are dispensed to the villages by the traders. Thus only could the ancient village be re-established.

We fell to talking about the Indian problem in South Africa, and he cheerfully acknowledged that British opinion, apart from South African opinion, seemed to be sound on this subject. But in some queer way spinning threw its shadow on this part of our talk, I felt and I rather think he felt, that he had supplied the South Africans with their case. His complaint is that contact with Europe has destroyed the old life in India; theirs, that contact with India threatens their European standards of living. Gandhi would keep out European goods; the South Africans would go a step farther and keep out Indians. "Swadeshi" and "Colour-bar" Bills are obverse and reverse of the same idea. Both follow

from the despairing thought that East and West cannot intermingle without destroying each other's characteristic way of life.

Gandhi, the saint, is full of benevolence, and I listened to him while he earnestly disclaimed all sympathy with violent or anarchical ways of changing any existing order. Yet as he discoursed on the ravages which Western industrialism had wrought in the Indian village, I had the feeling that if he were Emperor of India invested with plenary powers, the regulations which he would make for the admission of Europeans and their settlement in India might not greatly differ from those which the South Africans are attempting to impose on Indians in South Africa to-day. I am, of course, aware that the last thing Gandhi desires is to afford excuses for either form of intolerance, but it is nevertheless true that "Swadeshi" and "Colour-bar" belong to the same spiritual family.

For the rest, I tried to draw him into talk of religion, taking as my peg a German book on Christianity and Indian thought which I saw on his table. But he would not follow this thread. He said briefly that the liberal Hindu theology was gaining ground, and that his campaign on behalf of the "untouchables" was gradually making progress, but in India one had to be patient. I asked about the feeling between Mohamedan and Hindu; he said that was greatly exaggerated, and hinted that we were fomenting it, which his disciples more emphatically declared to be the fact. I said I thought this to be an instance of the suspiciousness about which we had just been speaking, but I clearly made no impression. Nothing could have been more friendly than his welcome or our parting, but I bore away the impression of a mind working on a plane with which I could not establish contact.

CHAPTER XVII

A VISIT TO THE JAM SAHIB OF NAWANAGAR

The Solution of a Problem—The State of Nawanganar—A Deficient Rainfall and Making it Good—Development of the State—Old and New Jamnagar—A Benevolent Autocrat—Inspecting the Villages—The Ruler in Durbar—Many Arguments—Pearl Fishing—General Impressions.

I

ABOUT two hundred miles north of Bombay, lying along the southern coast of the Gulf of Cutch, is the little State of Nawanganar, one of the Kathiawar group, ruled over by the famous cricketer Ranjitsinhji, now His Highness the Maharajah Jam Sahib. What to do with famous cricketers when they have made their last centuries and laid down their bats is a problem unsolved in Great Britain, and still deserving the earnest consideration of the M.C.C. Here in this corner of India it has found its perfect solution ; for the famous cricketer, still in his prime, is devoting himself heart and soul to the welfare of the people committed to his charge and to the development of his and their estate, and bringing to his task an energetic and resourceful spirit which proves that his strokes are by no means exhausted.

Nawanganar is a little state by the Indian measurement, but it is as big as three average English counties, and

contains a population of 400,000 people distributed among 400 villages, with one town of more than 50,000 inhabitants and another of 20,000 inhabitants. Here is ample opportunity for a benevolent autocrat who takes his duties seriously. The Jam Sahib is no arbitrary despot. He has a Cabinet of three Ministers ; his towns have their municipalities ; his villages their headmen ; he has adopted the system of British law ; and cases both civil and criminal are tried by judges with five assessors. There is all the apparatus of a modern state, but the ruler keeps his hand on every department, and is incessantly moving about between his towns and villages, learning the needs of his people, hearing their complaints, planning ways of meeting their emergencies. His comings and goings are not merely the gracious visitations of royalty bestowing smiles and favours ; he is Prime Minister and Inspector and Chief Engineer and Court of Appeal and modern earthly Providence to all the 400,000, and, wherever he goes, there is business to do, reports to be considered and action to be taken.

For his territory is not like a stretch of green and smiling English country-side, where the rain falls plentifully and one crop or another is sure ; it is during nine months of the year a great brown waste with a few oases in it, and but for an incessant struggle to conserve its scanty water, might all fall back into desert and famine. I can imagine a painter thinking its landscape delightful ; the faint blue hills to the east, the rolling plains, the dark green mangrove plantations on the salt marshes, and the line of sea beyond give an exhilarating sense of space, colour and atmosphere. But one can see at a glance that it is a thirsty land. For four successive years the monsoon on which it absolutely depends for the sustenance of its population has either failed or been

seriously short, and its ruler has to reckon with the possibility that the careless deforestation of former times has permanently reduced its annual rainfall. What then is to be done? A spiritless man might accept it as the act of God and sit down in resignation while the population dwindled or moved away, but the Jam Sahib has taken it as a challenge to make good by science and human effort what Nature denies. He has satisfied himself that the scantiest monsoon will supply enough water for the whole territory if only it can be retained and stored instead of being left to run off into the sea. From that beginning two things follow. Dams must be built to hold up the rivers and contain the water; new wells must be sunk and old wells sunk deeper to tap the water at a lower level. Both operations are going on all over the country with State aid and under State supervision. Nawanagar is lucky in having an unlimited quantity of excellent stone and first-class masons among its populations. The cost of public works is thus reduced to a minimum, and dams can be constructed with the granite of the country on foundations of its rock.

The estimate of the ruler is that with the works now in progress and 25,000 wells the country will be safe from any famine or serious dearth. State-aid for the sinking of the wells, which cost about a thousand rupees each, is thus, for the present, a cardinal point of public policy. The State gives a free grant, and advances a further sum at a low rate of interest; the cultivator does the rest. He needs little urging, for he often knows that his existence depends on getting water. The result is that, in spite of a short monsoon, this territory strikes one as one of the most prosperous in India. Its people are well fed, smartly dressed, and for the most part live in substantial stone-built houses, instead of in the mud-

huts that one sees in such profusion elsewhere. A large proportion of its children are being educated in elementary or secondary schools, and a few years hence illiteracy will be extinct. Its hospitals and dispensaries are model institutions according to Western standards, and it is a pleasure to see their spotless cleanness and modern equipment. The principal medical officer is a man of the highest competence, and he is aided by well-qualified assistants and nurses. To him falls the supervision of jails, which conform to the same high standard. While the civil surgeon in British India has often to lament that the District Boards of municipalities will not give him the money he thinks necessary for the minimum of efficiency, here a benevolent autocrat sees that nothing is stinted for the health services, or, indeed, for any other service which he thinks will bring in a return for the benefit of the people.

There is nothing here of the "unchanging East." Wherever one goes there is a pleasant sense of bustle and activity. The little ports on the Gulf of Cutch are being developed, and bring in a constantly increasing revenue, which has been a veritable godsend in the years of dearth. The town of Nawanagar is being rebuilt with solid stone buildings of two stories or more, some in crescent-form with arcades below, and broad roads are being run through what were formerly mean streets. Close to the new market is a sitting statue of Edwin Montagu, an old friend of the Jam Sahib, who is here commemorated as the author of the Indian reforms. The style of architecture is a blend of East and West, and Hindu ornament embellishes Doric columns in a manner which may startle a severe taste. But it all is very much alive, and in keeping with the bright sun and glittering atmosphere.

I am not writing a guide book, or I could dwell on the extraordinary interest of the old buildings in the city of Nawanagar. The old palace within the walls is a labyrinth of closely packed and richly carved buildings, and the ceilings and walls are covered with paintings telling the story of the state and its rulers and the struggles by which they kept the Moghuls at bay. One can still see in a room in this old palace piles of pikes and swords, just as they were thrown down three hundred years ago after the decisive battle with the Moghuls which secured the independence of the state. Outside the city, one in the middle of a lake and one beside it, are two great round forts of a type which I have seen nowhere else in India. These too abound in curious detail, and have painted chambers within, which may occupy one by the hour in puzzling out their story. But the main interest here is the development of the modern state under its benevolent autocrat.

2

The villages of Nawanagar are divided into twelve groups, each of which is inspected at least once in the year by the ruler. It fortunately happened that the inspection of one of the out-lying groups, comprising seventy villages, fell due during my visit, and the ruler invited me to accompany him.

We travelled seventy miles across the territory in his very comfortable train, and Ford cars took us by bullock-cart tracks over the twelve miles that separated the rail-head from the village where the inspection was to be held. The way was over a rolling plain, with the hills not far off, and chink and black-buck came bounding across the road in front of the cars. We stopped to kill a large cobra which had been unwise enough to deploy

on our track, and made a game but futile attempt at escape into a tree. All the villages on the route were decorated, and the children sent up a British cheer to greet the ruler.

Our destination was a large, clean, and substantially built village, and all the clans and their bullock-carts and their camels were gathered about it. The durbar was held in the court-house, where the police magistrate tries his cases, and the Jam Sahib sat in the magistrate's chair, with his English friends on either side of him. Except his secretary no officials were with him. This is the first rule of these proceedings. The people are to be absolutely free to lay their petitions and make their complaints without the presence of officials. The officials will have their turn, but not till all the others have spoken. The proceedings are informal and paternal. The Jam Sahib is their father; what he says they will accept, but no one must come between him and them.

First come in the *patels* or headmen of the seventy villages, venerable-looking men, dressed in laced smocks and white linen trousers, with white or coloured turbans. They sit cross-legged on the floor and seem perfectly at their ease. Some of them bring written petitions, which the secretary collects for reference to the departments. Others have statements to make and speak very earnestly and fluently in their own tongue, Gujarati, which unfortunately I am unable to follow. I gather that they are making small complaints about assessments or police regulations. All are listened to patiently by the ruler, who either disposes of the matter off-hand or promises inquiry. The hearing takes about half an hour; they go away with respectful salaams and apparently well content.

Then come the cultivators, about a hundred in num-

ber, to my eye a more varied type and generally younger. Some are clean-shaven and have long hair with flat turbans ; others are bearded and moustached and have high turbans with long streamers. One or two Brahmins wear caps and have their caste-mark on their foreheads. For the next half hour the same process is repeated. There are petitions and complaints—that the headman has not behaved fairly, that pig, panther, jackal, or deer are doing more than the tolerated amount of damage to crops, that water is short, and so forth. But there are also lively personal incidents. A sullen looking lad complains that his wife has deserted him, and that his father-in-law is detaining her and demands to have her back. The Jam Sahib asks if they will accept his judgment instead of going to court about it, and the parties consent. Then the father-in-law gets up and tells his story, which is that the lad has ill-treated and even knifed his wife, and that her life will not be safe if she returns to him. The husband is asked what he has to say ; he scowls and glowers, but remains silent as though his tongue was paralysed. In the presence of the Jam Sahib he dare not deny what the whole company knows to be true ; so judgment goes by default, and the father-in-law is told to keep his daughter. Then as the company troops out, a veiled woman flits in and presents a petition and is told that she must have it stamped and presented in due form. She comes back later, having satisfied these formalities, but I could not discover what her complaint was about.

After the farmers come the merchants, money-lenders (*bumias*), traders, shopkeepers and others, who do the business of the villages and dispose of their surplus produce. They seem prosperous people and some of them are of the sharp, aquiline type. Their principal

spokesman is a tall fellow with bushy, dark moustache and mountainous blue turban. They have two complaints to make. First, that the duties on wine and tobacco—of which they have a monopoly—are too high and make these commodities disproportionately dear compared with their prices in neighbouring states; second, that the restriction of the rate of interest to 12 per cent. for the benefit of the farmers is unfair on them, and should be removed or relaxed. On the second plea they get the short but expected answer that the 12 per cent. is ample, and that the Jam Sahib will not have his cultivators ground down by usurious money-lenders. On the other point he argues with him. Wine and tobacco are luxuries, and those who want them must be ready to pay. What other states may do does not concern him. So far as he is concerned, he will be well content to lose the whole revenue if his people will give up smoking and drinking, but so long as they smoke and drink they must continue to pay. Having put their case, the merchants are apparently quite content to have it decided against them; the man with the blue turban subsides, and they troop out apparently in high good humour.

Last come the officials. They too sit on the floor while the Jam Sahib briefly summarizes the proceedings and tells them of certain things to be inquired into and put right. And so, having lasted about three hours the session ends. During the whole of the time the villagers, with all their families and bullocks and goats and camels, have sat in a circle about the court-house, the scarlet and orange of the women's dress and the gold-embroidered finery of the children lending an indescribable brilliancy to the whole scene as one looks out on it from the dark court-house. The interest is enormous, and

as each deputation comes out it is eagerly questioned and voices are raised in shrill conversation. Finally, the Jam is garlanded and his friends are garlanded, and the little procession is re-formed and makes off, while the crowd cheer lustily and children sing the State anthem.

Another day we go twenty miles across country to the sea-shore, and are carried in "dandies" over the mud-flats out to the great wooden zareba just below low-water mark where the pearl oysters are being brought up. The shore is lined with birds of all sorts, and hundreds of flamingos, rising suddenly from the flat, make a glorious rose-red cloud against the blue sky. Ten thousand oysters are collected, and we go back in procession with them to a little durbar, where the Jam Sahib in the shadow of his tent presides over their opening. About fifty fishermen squat round, each with a brass platter in front of him on which the oysters are piled. It is a breathless business. The pearl of great price may be found, or nothing may be found, or only the comparatively worthless "baroques" and inferior kinds. Three out of four contain nothing, and the fourth has a little cluster in its heart, and so on through varying kinds and qualities till one, in the third thousand yields the perfect product, of a size, lustre and colour which the expert who is watching pronounces to be of the highest quality, and worth at least £500. Another in the sixth thousand, is nearly as good, and when all are counted up, there are 3,500 of various sizes and qualities roughly assessed at £3,000 in value.

It is a messy business, for the pearl oyster is not the elegant transparent creature that is brought up at Whitstable or Colchester, but a large coarse kind, and the pearls have to be dug out of its yellow-brown interior.

But it is more exciting than hunting for mushrooms, and those who watch see a possible new source of revenue for the state which may presently be converted into dams, wells, schools and hospitals. The fishermen are a weather-beaten lot, hardened by much buffeting during the weeks of monsoon in the Gulf of Cutch, and some of them are in the habit of running every day the sixteen miles to Nawanagar and back to take their fish to market. Most of them have dyed hair and beards, and we gravely discuss with them, while they open the oysters, whether it is right to dye, and if so, which is the most becoming colour and the fastest against exposure in this climate. There is general agreement that dyeing is a necessity since it is not well that the young should know the age of their elders, and though there is a minority for black, a burly man who seems to be the leader of the party carries the day for his own colour, which is a pinkish brown. Then the conversation passes to the inconveniences of fasting, a subject rendered opportune by the fact that they are all Mohamedans, and since this is the month of Ramazan, they have eaten nothing since sunrise and will eat nothing till after sunset. The wish was piously expressed that the Prophet had chosen a month in which the sun rose later and set earlier, but it was thankfully acknowledged that there were worse months than March.

I bear away from Nawanagar the impression of a very able, benevolent man doing dutifully the work which has fallen to him, and combining new and old in a very interesting way. He and his people are like a great family; they all gather round him, and almost any day one may see a large part of his Civil Service playing tennis on the courts behind the palace, while he looks on and criticizes their game. The thought

flits through one's mind that if there were five hundred men like him in India—men trained and educated in England, but knowing India as only Indians know it—and they each had half a million Indians to look after, some part of the Indian problem would be solved. There are unfortunately not five hundred Jam Sahibs in India, and though he modestly tells me that he is a typical case of an Indian prince, I have yet to verify that fact. The relation of the Government of India to the ruling princes is a vastly important subject, which will need the most careful consideration, if and when we go forward to a Federal Constitution. The difficulty is to find a general principle which will give the good rulers the freedom which they ought to have to develop their states in their own way and yet prevent the bad from misgoverning or oppressing their subjects.

CHAPTER XVIII

SCRAPS FROM AN INDIAN NOTEBOOK

I

The Hereditary Priest

I ASKED my friend, the Civil surgeon, to let me accompany him when he went to inspect one of his outlying dispensaries, and we set off together one Sunday morning on one of the broad and pleasant roads that strike eastward from Meerut. I never tire of motoring on these Indian roads. They are shaded by trees the whole way, and for long stretches are superb avenues not of one kind of tree alone, as in most countries, but of a dozen different kinds, and many at that season were in full flower. For a mile you pass through a mango grove with its dark green clotted foliage ; then you change suddenly to stal, nim, and the different species, in which India abounds, of the ash and acacia tribe ; then you come to enormous banyans and dense fat pipals, and hail with a cheer the great scarlet blossoms of the cotton tree. There are birds innumerable, great and small ; the striped squirrels run incessantly across the road in front of the car, and large monkeys do each other's toilets under the trees. Every mile or so you pass a village, now Mohamedan, now Hindu, and the people are all over the fields making splotches of white, rose and orange, against the vivid green of the growing

corn. For twenty miles the road ran straight and flat, then we turned suddenly into a big village and mounted through its narrow lanes to a little square open space with a stone parapet on two sides of it.

The dispensary was just here, and while the doctor talked to his assistant and inspected his stores, I sat and looked at the view. It was a very wonderful view. Below me a great brown flat, with woods rising steeply from its margin, stretched out to the Ganges, which shone brightly in the sun five miles away ; and on the far side another flat melted into a dim blue horizon. Along the banks of the river was a line of huts, and through a glass I could make out little knots of people going down to bathe or coming up from the water. Immediately below was a poverty-stricken but very clean village of landless labourers, and looking down I could see into their little compounds and even into their houses. Behind, on the right, the ground rose steeply to a group of temples with their *gopurams* showing above the white-washed walls of the square compounds. A broad flight of very steep steps led from the flat to the gate of the principal temple—the stairway of the pilgrims who come in their million to the great *mela* which is held on the banks of the river every autumn. For this is Gurhmuktesar, the principal place of pilgrimage by the Ganges for the Hindus of the United Provinces, and the temple of Ganga Maia which crowns its height is most holy.

By this time my friend had done his business, and we walked together into the court-yard of this temple and looked at the shrine. The altar is under a canopy of plaster and stone, supported by carved pillars, presumably about 300 years old ; and Mother Ganges in the form of a very large and very ugly doll, dressed in green and

orange sits on top of it. Below her is a small jade elephant, the image of the god Ganesh, and on the panels to right and left are outline portraits of other deities in a lively primitive style. The altar is raised on steps and railed off by a low wooden railing within which was placed a large brass bowl. As we looked a woman came up and emptied a bag of sweet popcorn into the bowl, and another followed with a chunk of Indian sweetstuff. A minute or two later a little boy, who had been squatting on the steps came up and fetched the bowl and invited me to eat of the popcorn and the sweets, which I did with the proper ceremony and economy.

The gesture interested me, and I asked my friend the surgeon what it meant. He explained that the boy, aged nine, was the hereditary priest of this most sacred shrine, and that he had come somewhat precociously into this office through the premature death of his father. Mother Ganges, it seems, passes the good things offered to her on to her priests, and they became by right the perquisites of this child who wished to show his friendliness by inviting us to partake. The Superintendent of Police supplied other details. In addition to these offerings in kind there were sundry rupees to be picked up during the year, and at the time of the great pilgrimage anything up to 300 rupees. For the present the boy had to share with his mother, but in a very few years he would marry—and make a very good marriage—and then he would set up for himself with what, according to the village standard, would be untold wealth.

By this time there was a little crowd round us, and I asked the Superintendent of Police to pursue the subject. What of the boy's future after he had married and settled down? Would he grow up to be the spiritual director of his flock; would he get promotion in the

priesthood and go on to a higher sphere, say, Benares? What did they think? I do not know how my questions were translated, but there was an animated conversation in which the women were specially emphatic. The upshot as translated to me was that he would do none of these things, but quite certainly go to the bad. He would gamble and drink and go after other women and squander his dues and die young. I felt a little abashed at the turn the conversation had taken in the presence of the "hereditary priest," but he was a merry little scamp and seemed to be highly amused. I then asked whether they would continue to tolerate him as priest, if he pursued this course, but the question seemed not to be understood, and the answer so far as I could understand it, was that he was and would continue to be the hereditary priest of this famous shrine.

The talk was curiously impersonal, but it seemed to epitomize the stored-up experience of the village about hereditary priests. There are 200 other priests in this village of 7,000 people, and they make a living out of the multitude which comes here to bathe in the Ganges, to die on its banks, to deposit the ashes of their relatives in the sacred river. All must have certain prayers said for them, certain rites performed for them, and they pay fees from two annas upwards to the priests for performing the rites and saying the prayers.

Gurhmuktesar, I gathered, is considered a very fortunate as well as a very holy place.

2

Prestige

We were talking of prestige—British prestige—and the principal speaker was a highly distinguished Indian of the older generation. This is what he said:

"British prestige was at its zenith in the sixties and seventies of the last century. My father greatly respected England and he spoke with reverence of her great writers and statesmen—Milton, Burke, Byron, Shelley, John Stuart Mill, Gladstone and Bright. As children we were brought up to read your writers and the speeches of your statesmen, and we found them generous and inspiring. No one in those days talked of alien rule. We felt safe when England had leaders like Gladstone and Bright, and were glad to be associated with her. In those days your people here were doing their duty in a simple and quiet way and said very little about it.

"And then a change came, and though I do not know the reasons, I know that we felt it. You began to talk about your Empire, and Disraeli came on the scene boasting of your power and your greatness. You spoke as if you were masters of us body and soul, and as if we were children and barbarians. We had now become the 'white man's burden,' and, believe me, it is not pleasant to be anyone's burden. You seemed to forget that we had a pride of our own and that we had not asked you to carry us.

"This went on more and more all through the last twenty years of the last century. All your orators and all your newspapers talked of Empire and Imperialism, and the necessity of expanding and exploiting and governing with a firm hand. I don't know what was behind it all, but this was not the England that we older ones had admired and respected, and we withdrew into our shells, while young men came forward who had not known the old England and were resentful of the new. You had forgotten that in kindling your own Nationalist spirit you were bound also to kindle ours. There is always reaction to every political movement, and our Nationalism was the reaction of your Imperialism. Lord Curzon was a very able man, and I think in his way he was attached to India and wished to serve her, but he never let us forget that he was the great British Imperialist, and in his years here he did more to inflame Indian Nationalism than any other Viceroy before or since.

"To us older ones Amritsar came as the climax to all this. We know that strong measures may sometimes be necessary to keep order, but Amritsar was horrifying. The leaving of the wounded, the crawling order, the whippings and scourgings! You humiliated us deeply and it is hard to forget.

"Yet it must be forgotten, for we have to go on together—it is too late to part. I think things are mending and I am glad to see a better feeling growing up on both sides. But you mustn't expect too much all at once. I am no politician, but I know the bitterness of politics and young men are hot-headed and don't see the way of charity. If you want my advice, I would say, get back to your old ways and give men like myself a chance of coming to your side. If you will do that, your prestige will look after itself, or we will look after it for you.

"But another thing you must remember. Not only your prestige, but the prestige of all Europe has been shaken in these last twelve years. You won the war? Yes, it was better than losing it, but after what we have seen in Europe, you must not ask us to believe that your Western civilization is a pattern for us Eastern men. Ask us to work with you for something new and better, and we will listen; but don't set up the European example for us to follow."

3

Many Grievances

We were sitting—my wife and I—towards sunset one evening by the great marble tank in the centre of the Taj garden at Agra. It was the moment when the cypresses are a purple black and the white marble of the Taj is turned to a vast transparency of pink and violet against the saffron sky. There was a faint stir of wind, giving an incredible beauty and intricacy to the reflections in the water below. Presently there came a frock-coated Indian gentleman bringing three children with him. He sat down and seated them by his side, pointed to the scene in front and relapsed into silence. The children began to fidget, and then got up and walked over to where we were sitting and stared wide-eyed into our faces. We acknowledged the overture and took their hands and entered into such converse as one can with a child without knowing a word of its language. They were charming children, two boys and a girl, of

the flower-like type of Indian children, and were very smartly dressed in gold-embroidered coats and caps.

The father got up and came over to us and expressed a polite hope that the children were not being troublesome. And so we entered into conversation. He was a Bengali from Calcutta, had a brother-in-law living in Agra and came here once a year and brought his children with him. It was good for them to see these beautiful buildings and to learn what the glories of India are. Every day he came at this sunset hour—the choicest hour of the day—and when the moon was up, he came again by moonlight and his children with him.

I asked him whether he, a Bengali and a Hindu, counted these Moghul and Moslem buildings among the “glories of India.” He did undoubtedly, and entered into an explanation of what he said was the true Indian point of view. “India has had many masters. They come and they go; she takes from each of them the best that they have to give and extinguishes the rest, but she goes on and is always herself. The Moghuls have gone, but the Taj and the Moghul buildings remain the possession of India.”

Would this process go on?—I looked at his frock-coat and spectacles and bowler hat—or would the British make an end of the old India?

He smiled indulgently. India, the real India, was never more alive than at this moment. She had great men, great poets, great scientific students, great orators—there were movements going on in religion and philosophy of which the British knew nothing, and which (as he clearly implied) they were incapable of understanding. His English failed him to express his full meaning, but in stumbling and excited sentences he conveyed to me what was in his mind—the picture of

India, the deep, the subtle, the philosophical, enduring her crude masters and solacing herself with the sense of her superiority and her permanence.

“What really do the English know about us? Take our poets and writers. They read and say they admire Rabindranath Tagore, who has written a little in their own language. But what do they know of him? He is our great Bengali poet who writes for his own people in their own tongue and writes like this!”

He broke into Bengali and half sang and half recited a song of Tagore's, winding up impatiently, “Ah, but you don't understand it, you don't know how wonderful it is, and there are dozens more like it, and others are following in his footsteps, and making a wonderful new Indian literature.”

From the way in which he spoke of “the English,” I think he supposed me to be an American, but I wanted to hear him out and encouraged him to go on. He passed to the politicians, said that Gandhi was undoubtedly at this moment the greatest man in the world, that C. R. Das—whose irreparable loss all India was mourning—was an orator only to be compared with Burke, and that he and his successor the Pandit Motilal Nehru, had made sacrifices for the good of their country, of which European politicians would have been quite incapable. Again and again he harped on these sacrifices made by Indian politicians. They gave up immense practices at the bar; they went to prison, they spun their own cloth, they lived like hermits. No other country could show such politicians.

At last I said, if the British are leaving you free to develop your lives in your own way and all these movements are going on in spite of them, you have something to be thankful for. “You wouldn't say that if you were an Indian,” he replied fiercely. “The British

are draining the country, squeezing it dry." "How draining it?" I asked. For answer came a torrent of statistics. First the "Home charges," then the entire cost of the army, then item by item, a complete list of the exports from India, each in lakhs or crores of rupees, not in round numbers but down to the last unit, winding up with oil-seed measured in tons.

It took two minutes to recite and gradually I realized that he had learnt a whole page of the Indian statistical abstract by heart, and that the figures inflamed him and kindled his imagination precisely as a moment before it had been kindled and inflamed by the poem of Tagore's. He hurled them at me with growing excitement, "wheat nine hundred and eleven lakhs; jute sixty-two and a quarter crores," and so on till we came with a crash to the terrible "one million, two hundred and fifty-five thousand tons of oil-seed." All I could do was to murmur that we too were draining our country in the same way, but that in our queer Western way we thought it a sign of prosperity and even prided ourselves on the amount that we sent out. Again he smiled indulgently and evidently he thought it to be the final proof of the infirmity of the Western mind.

By this time the darkness had fallen and the Taj become a glimmering phantom. The effort had exhausted him, and his English seemed suddenly to fail, but he expressed a polite hope that we might meet again and passed out in silence with the three children following. All my sympathies go with him and them.

* * * * *

I find myself sympathizing with everybody in India. I sympathize with the intelligent and cultured Indian who feels his self-respect injured by the fact that his country is subject to alien rule; and if I were in his

place, I should undoubtedly feel as he does. I sympathize with the Indian civilian who came out under the old regime, as an instrument of the ruling race, and after years of disinterested and conscientious work finds himself compelled to discharge the hybrid functions of the administrator-politician, to explain and to argue where he has been accustomed to command, to make speeches like the despised Padgett, M.P., to spend hours of his valuable time sitting in Councils and Assemblies, and to answer with his stammering tongue the irrational complaints of the fluent babu.

I sympathize with the young Indian who in a burst of confidence tells me how beastly it is to come back after three years of Oxford life and live in the family "barrack" and take up the Eastern ways and be compelled to marry a girl he has not seen and to be exposed to snubs and mortifications, if he seeks the friendship and good comradeship that he has been accustomed to in England. I sympathize with the Civil surgeon who sees his hospitals deteriorating, his supplies cut down and his village dispensaries reduced and starved, because the District Council under the new order will not give him the necessary grants or is quarrelling interminably with the municipality about the proportion in which the one or the other should pay. I even sympathize with the young A.D.C. who, writhing under the attacks of Nationalist politicians and newspapers on his chief, breaks out into imprecations and asks, "What are we doing in this damned country, why don't we leave it to its dust and its plague and its malicious politicians and its infernal climate, and go back and lead a decent life among white people?"

Whoever would make a policy for India must listen to all these complainants.

CHAPTER XIX

SOME GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

A Glittering Confusion—Unanswerable Questions and Working Solutions—The “Lost Dominion”—Optimism Justified—Lord Reading’s Viceroyalty—Difficulties of Dyarchy—Encouragement of Irresponsibility—The Year 1929—A Vicious Circle—The Government and Its Two Masters—The Federal Idea—The Westminster Model—The Need of Inquiry in India—The Duties of the Indian Official—Half-Politician and Half-Bureaucrat—The Silence of the Government—The Provinces and the Central Government—Western Institutions in the East—The True Doctrine of Home Rule—Artificiality of Indian Politics—“Holding the Cow while they milk It”—The Promise of Self-Government—The required *Modus Vivendi*.

I

SO far I have endeavoured to record my impressions as they came to me from day to day during the three months’ journey. It is the peculiar quality of India to multiply impressions and to overlay one with the other, until one’s mind is reduced to a glittering confusion. But there comes a moment when this must be resisted and an attempt made to sift one’s thoughts. My own thoughts, let me say, are not those of the Indian expert, but merely of one who brings a political eye from home to the Indian scene.

Broadly speaking, what I saw in India during the three months of my stay there seems to me to justify the hope that the British-Indian problem will by degrees find

a peaceful working solution. I lay stress on the word "working." Half the questions with which British and Indians vex their souls are in the nature of things unanswerable. There are no final solutions for any political problem, and least of all for the Indian. One can only speak in terms of the present generation.

I have been told a dozen times by elderly officials (and their wives) that the ancient glories are departed, and that there is nothing for the man with the pen to do in India except take an inventory of the disused furniture of the "Lost Dominion." I cannot measure these ancient glories, for they were gone before my time, and I heard exactly the same lamentations over their departure and the weakness and the folly which had let them slip from our hands when I was in India fourteen years ago as during the last few months. Indeed, my memory is that these lamentations were louder in the former days than now. I see great changes in India, and can only record my own impression that most of them are for the better. In all the great centres the relations between British and Indians struck me as friendlier and more human. The two mingle in business, politics, in clubs, in learned and scientific societies, in sport and pleasure as certainly they did not when I was here before. The harsh, racial tone which at one time characterized a portion of the British Press in India has disappeared, and no Indian can fairly complain that he is not treated with fairness and courtesy by the English newspapers. If the racial note is forced anywhere, it is rather in the Indian than in the English Press, for the Indian, it must be said, is in danger of taking over some British defects just when the British are beginning to discard them.

Permanent residents in India do not see these things, but they strike one who returns after some years of absence.

India is to me a more interesting, a more alive, and a more cheerful country than it was fourteen years ago. The wave of emotion which swept over her, as over all the East after the War, has passed, leaving the mass of people less interested in politics but more interested in their material conditions. On the whole we may say that we have not come badly out of these years, and, as we look back on them, the wisdom with which Lord Reading kept a cool and steady course and resisted all temptation to splash and sensationalism will, I think, be more and more recognized as the best services that a Viceroy could have rendered in the necessarily difficult conditions.

On the other hand, we are still only at the beginning of the political part of the problem.

The reforms of 1919 were, I imagine, the best that Mr. Montagu could get out of the Government of which he was a member or the queer Parliament of that period, but he cannot have thought of them as more than a temporary stage. They have, I think, been fairly justified by their general results. They helped through the period of agitation after the War, and have largely contributed to the general co-operation and the pooling of brains and thoughts which I have already noted as the great change in India during these years. In these respects they have been altogether beneficial, and whatever difficulties there may have been in working them, there would probably have been far greater without them. All that seems to me incontestable. Nevertheless, as a political device the thing called "Dyarchy" has great defects; and if it is allowed to continue unamended, it may, instead of instructing Indians in responsible government, as Mr. Montagu intended, have the exactly opposite result of turning them into irresponsible agitators.

Even at the risk of repetition let me explain again

what Dyarchy is. It is the system under which, in the Provincial Councils, certain departments are given over to Ministers chosen from elected persons (generally Indians) who are supposed to be responsible to their constituents, and certain other departments reserved to officials who are responsible to no one but the Governor. It is the system under which the Governor has the power to "certify" measures which he thinks necessary, but which the Council refuses to pass, and to veto measures which he thinks unnecessary or dangerous when the Council insists on passing them. The chief difficulty about these conditions is that the ultimate financial control is a reserved subject, and that unless he has some control over finance, it is impossible to hold a Minister responsible for his department. Thus a Minister of Education—to take one example of a "transferred subject"—may consider a certain expenditure absolutely essential to his department, but be told towards the end of the financial year that no money is available. According to the strict theory of Dyarchy, this is no concern of his, and he ought to remain in office and accept the decree of the Finance Minister. In practice it is fatal to him, and he must either resign or confess himself to be a futile and irresponsible person.

Even more serious is the fact which is known to all the elected members of the Councils (and the Assembly¹) that they can do anything they choose, demonstrate, obstruct, take steps which, if they were operative, would bring the whole administrative machine to a standstill and no serious consequences follow, since in the last

¹ In the Central Executive there is no division of departments; all remain in the hands of the non-elective executive, but all legislation is submitted to the Assembly, and the Viceroy retains the power of veto and certification.

resort the Governor or the Viceroy can "certify" whatever is necessary. Thus when I was at Delhi the Swarajists dealt with the Railway Budget in a way which, if it had taken effect, would have paralysed all the railways in the country. They knew of course that it would not take effect, and were merely using the occasion to make a political demonstration against the Government.

Where Dyarchy succeeds, as in the Punjab, Bombay, or Madras, it is where the Governor practically ignores the theory and treats his Ministers as one Cabinet, with joint responsibility for all departments. I see no other way if the Indian Minister is to be taught responsibility and his reputation as a responsible Minister maintained in his party and among his constituents. Whenever feeling runs high, the attempt to enforce the strict theory of Dyarchy must result in portfolios being declined by men who take themselves seriously, and the Councils being turned into platforms for political demonstrations by their followers. A few years of this, and habits of irresponsibility may have become ingrained which it would take years to unteach.

I can find no opinion in India worth considering which is in favour of going back on the reforms, but I find a great deal of doubt and perplexity about the way in which they have operated, and what should be done in the next stage. They have operated, in my opinion, exactly as they would have operated in England or any European country, and if we are to get on to safe ground we must not suppose that political human nature is in some mysterious way different in India from what it is in England or in Europe.

2

It would be folly for a writer who has lived his life in England to dogmatize about the next steps in India,

but he may be allowed to set down certain impressions which strike the English political eye. For good or evil, India is involved in politics, and in India as elsewhere, certain rules must be observed if politics are to proceed smoothly and safely.

My first impression is that the Government of India and the Indian politicians have tied themselves into a knot which they had better unravel as quickly as possible. The unhappy date, 1929—the year in which, according to the Act, the reforms must be reconsidered—hangs over the country, having become a focus for agitation for one side and a point of resistance for the other. It encourages the idea of a fore-ordained crisis and raises expectations which it may be impossible to satisfy. There is no necessity for this date; the Government itself concedes that there are certain conditions on which it may be advanced. But in practice, and especially since the Muddiman Report, it has come to be regarded as a fixed date which is only to be revised on something which is called “good behaviour.” In consequence the two parties perpetually move round in a circle. The Government says, “We will advance, if you will co-operate,” the Indian, “We will co-operate if you will respond.” This wounds vanity, and is a petty but accumulating source of irritation. The Indian feels that he is being treated like a child who is promised a reward “if he is good,” and is instantly on his mettle not to win the reward that way. What the Government calls his reward he thinks of as his right, and he complains bitterly that the Government requires his “abject submission.” If this goes on for another three years, it may (and probably will) create an atmosphere of petty exasperation which will be unfavourable to wise action on either side.

I should like, therefore, to see the red letter removed from the year 1929, and all embargoes on reconsideration raised as quickly as possible. Political machinery should be mended as and when it is found deficient ; the expectation of sudden and great changes in one direction or another should not be encouraged. The experience of the Act of 1919 has been quite sufficient ; the need of getting the mind of India turned to the great and difficult problems that lie ahead is urgent.

For these problems are extraordinarily difficult, and in ways which neither Indians, nor, be it said with respect, even British administrators seem completely to understand. At the back of them is the basic perplexity how "responsible government" is to be developed in India and the Government of India to remain responsible to the Imperial Parliament. How can one Government serve two masters, be responsible, as the Indians desire, to the people of India, and responsible also to the King-Emperor working through the British Parliament? And supposing this question answered, as it may be, by some characteristic British compromise or legal fiction, what type of Government have we or the Indians in mind for the final government of India? Is it federal, according to the American or the various Dominion models, or unitary, according to the British model? This question must be answered in some sort before we can go ahead. The Swarajist slogan for the next stage is "Absolute provincial autonomy ;" yet it is manifest that no autonomy could be "absolute" for the Indian Provinces without being ruinous to the Central Government. Every development for the provinces must require the corresponding adjustment to the Central Government.

It would be well if the intelligentsia of India could be set to work without delay on some of these questions

—if, say, student circles could be formed in the universities or wherever young men congregate to debate and inquire into them. Sir Frederick Whyte, in a little book he has recently published, has provided some raw material for the beginning of these studies, but it needs to be sifted and simplified, and reduced as far as possible to the alternatives between which choice must be made. For this purpose some action on the part of the Government of India to declare the debate open or to define the questions which have to be settled, seems to me highly desirable, indeed imperative. For though the British Parliament must retain the last word, it is not a good plan to launch ready-made upon India schemes which have been evolved in Whitehall and tell Indians to work them. In all Western countries constitutional reforms have been the result of long-lasting controversy and debate which have enabled the public to understand what is aimed at and what is expected of them. It is idle to suppose that we can omit this education in India or look to Indians to work loyally a constitution which they have had no hand in fashioning, and which in all probability they will not understand.

The Indian youth has been far too much encouraged to rely on British analogies. He thinks of a Parliament being set up in India on the model of the Westminster Parliament, and Governments going in and out of office on the victory or defeat of their parties. He does not see the difficulty of instituting franchises and organizing parties over the enormous and diversified area of India, or the risk which would be entailed by making its Executive dependent on the unpredictable currents of opinion among its different races and communities. He has so long taken the Government of India for granted that he does not realize what an immense and

artificial effort it has been to make India one;* how priceless a boon her unity is, and how easily it might be destroyed by a jerry-built constitution. Let him be induced to consider the federal constitutions, especially the American, and the steps which they take to keep the Central Government strong against both the vicissitudes of party politics and the encroachments or quarrels *inter se* of the State Governments.

3

It is improbable that the ground can be cleared for any serious changes before the year 1929, but it would be an immense advantage if the debate on these subjects could in some formal way be declared open and steps taken to educate opinion on them. The Indian politician is extremely intelligent and acute, and in friendly talk far less obstinate and fanatical than his critics suppose him to be. But he is apt to work on a few formulas taken from English text-books which he supposes to be of universal application, and he has generally no idea of the difficulties which democratic institutions are encountering in the West, or which they must encounter in a country where the whole social system is built on caste inequalities. On our side we are doing almost nothing to educate him politically or to present in an intelligible way the questions which he and we have to answer.

The truth is—and one must put this bluntly—the Government of India is ill-equipped for the political part of the task which the new order has laid upon it. This may be said without imputing any blame, for the type of man it is now required to produce, the man who is half-administrator and half-politician, who is trained as an official, and on a sudden called upon to be a Cabinet

Minister and public man holding his own in debate, exists almost nowhere, and can only be evolved in time. But in his absence or default, one sees the Government at a serious disadvantage in that necessary part of political business which is called propaganda. It is bound to debate with parties which are in fact its political opponents, but it leaves the field almost clear to them, and generally contents itself with answers that are little more than a bald rehearsal of facts.

I was present in the Assembly at Delhi when the Swarajist party walked out after its leader, the Pandit Motilal Nehru had made a long, reasoned, and from his point of view, effective and skilful statement of his party's policy. I expected it to be followed by a serious and reasoned statement of the Government of India's point of view. It was followed only by the briefest expression of regret that the Pandit had thought it necessary to act in that way. The next day the Pandit's speech occupied many columns of the newspapers, British and Indian, with not a word of answer or correction from the Government. Between now and November the Swarajists will be all over the country assailing the Government, and in their wake will be Liberals and Independents also assailing the Government, though from a more moderate point of view; but there will be neither candidates nor speakers supporting the Government, and probably no official will think it either necessary or proper to break silence on its behalf.

Sometimes it crosses one's mind that the Government of India might be provided with a corps of specially-trained political men whose business it would be to speak and write for the Government and explain its problems and difficulties. In any case the spectacle which the Government presents of being half in and

half out of politics, of presenting itself as a target and seldom or never replying, is highly anomalous to the Western eye, and it is difficult to see how the political education which India needs can proceed far on these lines. But that is for future consideration. At the moment I can only suggest that, as a preliminary to the revision promised by Parliament, an inquiry should be opened in India itself on official initiative, and opinion and discussion invited from all quarters. This, I think, would help to end the present impasse and contribute materially to the education of the Indian people.

Beyond that I can only offer tentative suggestions. Dyarchy, I think, must pass, and all offices be thrown open to those who are fit to hold them. On the other hand, no Government can permit itself to be paralysed by non-co-operation, and if the Provincial Ministries are to be collectively responsible, and to go in and out of their offices at the will of their constituents, Indians must be prepared to give the Central Government power to suspend them and take over their duties if they fail to function. What Indians have to realize is that provisions of this kind are in no sense a reflection on them. In no similar area in the world, whether in Europe, America or Asia, could orderly government or national unity be maintained without the strongest powers being freely conceded to the Central Government. The American Commonwealth, which is the nearest parallel, bristles with vetoes and limitations, and no American considers them undemocratic or a reflection on his competence. A strong Central Government freely conceded the powers it must have is, to my eye, the key to what is called responsible government in the Provinces. Nothing is more desirable than real responsibility in the Provinces ; nothing less desirable

than that the Indian rôle should be that of irresponsible agitation ; but India cannot dispense with the means of enabling the King-Emperor's Government to be carried on, if in the last resort the politicians bring it to a standstill. At present the presumption among Indian politicians is that their rôle is one of chronic opposition to a "bureaucratic Government." This must somehow be overcome, if self-governing institutions are to develop, but the Indian must be willing to give the necessary guarantees for stability and continuity in the governing machine.

4

While I was in India Lord Balfour was reported to have said that in his opinion Western institutions could not be applied to an Eastern country like India. I have not seen the speech, but an Indian politician repeated this *obiter dictum* to me as an example of the air of superiority which the West gives itself over the East. I answered that Lord Balfour's belief in the superiority of Western institutions was by no means so notorious that Indians need necessarily draw an unflattering inference from these words, if he used them ; and I went on to ask my Indian friend if he was not really in his own heart of the same opinion. Would he, for example, if he had his own way, be willing to confer the franchise on all adults in India, regardless of condition or sex ; could he honestly say that democratic ideas as understood in the West were acceptable to a population which was graded in innumerable castes and accepted their inequalities as the decree of divine Providence—which regarded about a sixth of the population as "untouchable" ? He was, of course, bound to admit that for any time which he or I could foresee, India must differ so widely from Europe that any attempt to force European institutions on her prematurely

would end in disaster ; and he presently took the far more sensible line that the Indian so differed from the Englishman that what the latter could do for the former was limited and that India must advance, if she is to advance at all, on Indian lines, of which Indians must be the judge.

This, it seems to me, is the true doctrine and the real justification for the accepted ideal of Indian self-government. What the Englishman can do for India is limited in a hundred ways by his inability to establish intimate contact with the Indian masses, his fear of intruding on their religion and customs, his imperfect knowledge of their languages and their ways of thought, the limits which are set to his power of taxing them, their suspicions of him even when he is bringing gifts. No Englishman who looks at India can feel it right to impose these limitations, if Indians are convinced that they can help their country forward by their own efforts.

But both English and Indians are on false ground when the one pretends, and the other accepts the pretence, that India is a kind of undeveloped Europe, which only needs to be endowed with Western institutions to go peacefully ahead in the path of progress.

That India is changing, and changing very rapidly, is the belief of almost everyone who lives in the country, but those who know her best are the first to confess that they are unable to predict her movements or to measure them by any of the criteria which would apply to Western politics. Her agitations die down when the observer with Western eyes expects them to boil up ; they are kindled suddenly by causes which are equally obscure to British and Indian politicians. No one, for example, could tell me the cause of the sudden exacerbation of feeling between Hindu and Mohamedan which has been the leading feature of the last twelve months. A

dozen people gave me a dozen different reasons, and they all seemed inadequate. Religion in India renders no account to politics, and the politicians constantly see their plans thwarted by religious impulses which baffle their forecasts and are beyond their control.

All this gives a certain artificiality to Indian politics. The real masters of opinion in the country are not yet, if they ever will be, politicians. Gandhi for the troubled three years from 1920 to 1923, had a power in India such as no single man has wielded for hundreds of years. But he had it on a wave of mystic national sentiment which may not recur except after another upheaval like that of the Great War, and as it wanes, he seeks to recover it by turning his back on politics and appealing to the multitude as saint and religious teacher. The constituents to whom the politicians appeal are only 5 millions out of an adult male population of 60 millions; the constituency to which the saint appeals may be the whole 60 millions and their wives and children.

My own impression is that the constituencies to which the politicians appeal are too small and that an increase in the number of the voters would diminish the chance of their being bought or intimidated, and compel candidates to take a keener interest in social problems as distinguished from the mechanical and constitutional questions which now occupy nearly the whole of their thoughts. But in any case we cannot forget the unenfranchised millions which in spite of their technical illiteracy include large numbers of intelligent people with a stake in the country; and no revision of the constitution ought to neglect the unsolved problem of devising a franchise which will be fairly representative of these people and give them an opportunity of electing men who understand their needs and problems.

But here again it is useless to suppose that democratic analogies from Europe will show the way. Necessarily we start from exclusions which rule out the democratic principle and are thrown back on various forms of selection in conformity with Indian ideas. Already we include a large number of "illiterates," and I see no reason why we should not include a great many more.

5

The voice of the die-hard will be heard saying, "Are you really proposing to become servant instead of master and do you expect your soldiers and officials to lend themselves to this process? Are we to hold the cow while they milk it—to give them the protection of our Navy, to provide an Army which shall secure them against outside aggression and internal disorder, and at the same time leave them free to govern or misgovern the country as they choose? It is the question which our forefathers asked about the other Dominions, and we can only answer it by saying that this foolishness, as it seems to the gentiles, is at the heart of the British system all over the world, and, by general acknowledgment, the secret of its endurance.

Whether a new political form must be devised for India or whether a line must be drawn between Europeans and Asiatics and the method which has proved good for the one be declared impossible for the other, are questions which India now presents to us. We have been saying for the last seventy years that we acknowledge no such line; for all this period we have been repeating that our object is to render the people of India capable of governing themselves, and we have said it with special emphasis in times of stress and trouble. We cannot go on saying these things without

being expected to act up to them ; and we must either do so or be prepared for a passive resistance which may so increase the cost and difficulty of our rule as to wear down the patience of the taxpayer, and to fill serious people with a sense of the futility and vexatiousness of our self-imposed task.

One may wish that the presumption of an unchanging East in which benevolent autocrats from the West dispensed law and justice to a grateful population and held their own by their prestige, had survived into our time. It has not done so, and to acknowledge that it has passed is the beginning of wisdom as between East and West. It does not follow that safety will be found by applying Western institutions crudely to the East, but it does follow that the West must cease to think in terms of the nursery about the East. The children can no longer be spoon-fed or order restored among them by judicious and periodic chastisement. Nor will they accept without question things which are said to be for their good, or refrain from making their own experiments and committing their own follies. They are not as mature as they think, or as juvenile as some of their preceptors suppose. They are in the stage in which they are sensitive of slights, resentful of patronage and tutelage, full of questioning about the old ways and uncertainty about the new. The state of the world being what it is, they cannot live without us, and sometimes find it difficult to live with us. The *modus vivendi* will, I believe, be found, for the patient good-humour and tolerance, and the live-and-let-live British disposition, is in the long run what is best fitted and least galling to the Eastern temperament, but we must be prepared for experiments all the way, and not be discouraged because some of them fail or prove premature.

INDEX

- ADLY PASHA, Coalition Ministry of, 80
 Agra, the Taj garden at, 232 *et seq.*
 Agricultural Commission, the, appointment of, 21, 170
 Agricultural Research Department, Sural, 201
 Agriculture, primitive condition of, in rural India, 163
 Ahmedabad, cotton mills of, 214
 Allenby, Lord, and disturbances in Egypt, 71
 Amritsar, tragedy of, 173, 231
 Ancyra (modern Angora), 45
 Andrews, Mr. C. F., co-operates with Tagore, 203
 Angora, new capital of Turkey, 8, 33 ; general aspect of, 45 *et seq.*
- BAKER, SIR HERBERT, architect of New Delhi, 132 (note)
 Benares, the Hindu College at, 179
 Bengal, breakdown of Dyarchy system in, 125
 Bengalis, grievances of, 205-7
 Bhattacharya, Pandit Vidhushekar, head of research department, Santiniketan, 200
 Bihar, Swarajist policy in, 119
 Bilharzia, prevalence of, in Egypt, 90 (note)
 Bombay, changes in, 101 *et seq.* ; Swarajist policy in, 119
 Bose, Sir J. C., research work of, 23
 Brahmins, and caste, 165, 166
 Breasted, Professor, and ancient Egyptian buildings, 98
 British politics and India, an analogy, 148-9
 Bullocks, care of, in India, 169
 Burkett, Mr., British engineer-in-charge at Ferozepore, 173
- CAIRO, houses of, 65
 Cairo Museum, Tutankhamen objects in, 93, 94 ; Milner Commission and, 96
 Calcutta, author's address to Rotary Club at, 29 (note) ; impressions of, 105 *et seq.* ; speech on journalism at, 142 *et seq.* ; Gandhi speaks at, 188-90.
 Calcutta Improvement Trust and housing, 106
 Caliphate, the, abandoned as a Turkish institution, 9, 29, 121
 "Canal-head" scheme, financial results of, 175
 "Capitulations," taxation under, 38, 84, 89
 Carter, Mr. Howard, discovers tomb of Tutankhamen, 94-5 (note)
 Caste distinctions in India, 165, 166, 187, 192, 194, 200
 Cattle, slaughter of, prohibited, 168, 177 ; in British India, 169 (note)
 Central Legislature, the, Delhi, 119, 131 *et seq.*
 Central Provinces, the, Swarajist policy in, 119 ; breakdown of Dyarchy in, 125
 Child-labour in rural India, 163 (and note)
 Chirol, Sir Valentine, his book on India, 187, 194
 Cholera in India, 163
 Christianity, from the Hindu viewpoint, 188
 Civil Servant, the old-style, and his undoing, 153 *et seq.*
 "Colour-bar," South Africa and, 214, 215
 "Committee of Independence," Kemal Pasha's, 34, 39, 50
 Constantinople, as sea-gate, 10 ; its lure, 32 ; cosmopolitanism of, 33 ; how foreigners are harassed in, 34 *et seq.*

- Cotton tax, an Anglo-Indian on, 160
 Cow, the, sanctity of, in India, 169
 (and note), 184
 Cromer, Lord, his post in Egypt, 69
 Curzon, Lord, and the Lausanne
 agreement, 11, 57 ; as Imperialist,
 231
- DARJEELING, a mountain view from,
 110 ; Sunday gatherings at, 114 ;
 hill-station, 116
 Das, C. R., self-sacrifice of, 211, 234
 Deerut, British murdered at, 71
 Delhi Assembly, 119, 131 *et seq.*
 Disease, liability of Egyptians to, 90
 (and note)
 Douglas, Father, of the Oxford
 Mission, 189
 Durbar, a village, 221 *et seq.*
 Dyarchy, explanation of system of,
 124 *et seq.*, 240 ; difficulties of,
 239
- EDUCATION, low level of, in Egypt,
 89 ; problem in India, 163 (note) ;
 poetical and practical, 199
 Egypt, attitude towards foreigners in,
 37-8, 66-7 ; geographical position
 of, 66, 80 ; Army of Occupa-
 tion in, 69, 83 ; politics in, 79 *et*
seq. ; birth- and death-rate in, 90
 (note) ; an American's impression
 of, 102
- FAMILY obligations, Indian, 166-7 ;
 drawbacks of, 187
 Fasting, Indian belief in, 210 ; pearl
 fishers' views of, 225
 Fellahin, their primitive conditions
 of living, 89
 Ferozepore, a visit to, 173
 Fez, the, prohibited in Turkey, 27 ;
 worn in Egypt, 66
 Fuad, King, unpopularity of, 77
- GANDHI, MAHATMA, interview with,
 20-1, 211 *et seq.* ; abjures poli-
 tics, 118, 209 ; and non-co-ope-
 ration, 121, 149 ; his power in India,
 159, 250
 Ganga Maia, temple of, 228-30.
- Gangulee, Indian scientific agricul-
 turist, 23, 170, 201
 Gates, Dr., of Robert College, 60
 Great Britain, average length of life
 in, 163
 Greeks, repatriation of, 41
 Grey, Lord, "Twenty-five Years"
 by, 69
 Gurhmuktesar, pilgrimages to, 228
 Guru, the, and his *chelas*, 211
- HAGUE COURT, and the Mosul ques-
 tion, 57
 Hailey, Sir Malcolm, Governor of
 the Punjab, 172
 Hand-loom and cotton-mill, 165
 Hats replace the fez in Turkey, 27-9
 Hereditary priest, the, 227 *et seq.*
 High Commissioner of Egypt and
 his duties, 68, 86
 Hinduism, two descriptions of, 168 ;
 a synthesis of, 179 ; birth a salient
 factor in, 182 ; Christian in-
 fluence on, 190
 Hindus, their conception of Moslems,
 122, 182 ; definition of, 182, 183
 Holdings, subdivision of, as cause
 of poverty, 169
 Home Rule, Indian, true doctrine of,
 249
 Housing question in Egypt, 89
- INDIA, administrative problem of, 15
et seq. ; poverty in, 21, 163-5,
 212 ; peasants' houses of, 89 ;
 climate and population of, 102,
 103 ; villages in, 103-4, 162 ;
 tourists in, 112-14 ; questions to
 be faced in, 147, 156-7 ; average
 length of life in, 163 ; infant
 marriage in, 167 ; reverence for
 sanctity and self-sacrifice in, 187
 Indian politicians, and House of
 Commons strategy, 138, 144
 Indian politics, artificiality of, 250
 Innes, Sir Charles, as Parliamen-
 tarian, 133
 "Inviolable frontier" of the New
 Turkey, question of, 10
 Irwin, Lord, and the Agricultural
 Commission, 170
 Ismail, Khedive, and Cairo, 66

JAINS, religious scruples of, 192-3
 Jalianwala Bagh incident, 128
 Jam Sahib, visit to, 216 *et seq.*
 Journalism, political, a speech on, 142-3

KEMAL PASHA, prohibits the fez, 27 ;
 Turkish conception of, 28, 52-3 ;
 religious reforms of, 31 ; resi-
 dence of, 49 ; appearance of, 52 ;
 plot against, 52 (note) ; Indian
 Moslem opinion of, 121

Kinchinjunga Mountains, 110
 Koran, the, Turkish Nationalists
 and, 30

Kurdish question, the, Turkish
 view of, 57-8

LAJPAT RAI, tribute to Delhi offi-
 cials, 151-3

Land-system, the Indian, 169

Lausanne agreement, Turkish view
 of, 11

League of Nations, and Mosul, 10,
 11, 55-7

Lepcha tribe, dress of, 114

Lindsay, Sir Ronald, and Mosul, 10,
 59

Lloyd, Lord, becomes High Com-
 missioner, 77 *et seq.*

Lutyens, Sir Edwin, architect of new
 Parliament House, 132 (note)

MADRAS, Swarajist policy in, 119 ;
 Dyarchy system in, 125 ; caste
 distinctions in, 166

Mahajas, religious scruples of, 192-3
 Maha Sabha, and Hindus, 122

Malaria, in Angora, 48 ; in India,
 163

Mecca, Congress of, 30 (note)

Medical officers, work of, and how
 impeded, 194

Milner, Lord, and Egypt, 74, 75

Milner Mission (1919-20), 7, 15, 37,
 67, 71 *et seq.* ; Report of, 73 *et seq.*,
 96

Missionaries, their task in India, 188
et seq.

Money-lenders, Indian, and func-
 tions of, 164

Montagu, Edwin, statue of, in
 Nawanagar, 219

Montagu reforms, justification of, 23,
 123, 239 ; date for revision of, 16,
 129, 141, 242

Moplahs in Southern India, atrocities
 of, 120

Moslem Papacy, abolished in Tur-
 key, 9, 29

Mosques, Turkish, compared with
 Indian, 31

Mosul, question of, 11, 55-7

Muddiman, Sir Alexander, leader of
 Delhi Assembly, 133, 134

Mukerji, Dhan Gopal, author of
 "My Brother's Face," 23

Mussolini, Signor, and Smyrna, 12

NAWANAGAR, Maharajah Jam Sahib
 of, a visit to, 216 *et seq.*

Nehru, Pandit Motilal, as Parlia-
 mentarian, 133, 139, 246 ; attitude
 to "civil disobedience," 139, 149
 (note) ; tribute to the "sun-dried
 bureaucrat," 152 (note) ; self-
 sacrifice of, 211, 234

Nile Conservancy Board, a sug-
 gested, 83

OFFICIAL YEAR-BOOK, India, sum-
 mary of reports of Sir A. Muddi-
 man's Committee in, 124 (note)
 Orissa, Swarajist policy in, 119

PALESTINE EXPEDITION, the, Egyp-
 tians in, 70

"Paper Boats" by K. S. Venka-
 taramani, quoted, 185-6

Pearl fishing, experiences of, 224

Peter Pan theory of India, the, 153

Plague in India, 167

Plough, a primitive, 163

Politics in India, 117 *et seq.*

Poor-law, why unnecessary in India,
 166, 187

Prestige, an Indian's views on, 230
et seq.

Punjab, the, Swarajist policy in, 119 ;
 Mohamedans in, 121, 176 ; anal-
 ogy with Egypt, 172

Purdah women, liability to the
 plague of, 167

Puri, caste suspended in, 192 (note)

- RAI, RAJPUT, as Parliamentarian, 133
 Railway stations in India, scenes on, 104
 Raisina, new Parliament House at, 132
 Ranjitsinhji, K. S., a visit to, 216 *et seq.*
 Rao, Badahur, historian of India, 23
 Reading, Lord, tribute to Viceroyalty of, 120, 239; and the agricultural problem, 170
 Robert College, Constantinople, 60, 61
 Rockefeller, Mr., a munificent offer by, declined, 97

 SACRED animals of India, 168, 184
 Sanitation in Egypt, 89
 Santiniketan, Tagore's colony at, 196 *et seq.*
 Sapru, Sir Tej Bahadur, on "civil disobedience," 150 (note)
 School, a model, 196
 Sexual precocity, curse of, 168
 Sikkim, former suzerainty of, 114
 Sirdar, the, assassination of, 76
 Smyrna, carpet industry of, 41
 Sorabji, Cornelia, writer and lawyer, 23
 South Africa, Gandhi on Indian problem in, 214-15
 Spinning-wheels in Gandhi's *Ashram*, 213
 Sriniketan (the Abode of Energy), Sural, 201
 Sudan, the, Egypt and, 13, 83; British interest in, 83
 Suez Canal, British interest in security of, 83
 "Sun-dried bureaucrats" and their critics, 144, 151, 152 (note), 153
 Sutlej River, engineering works on, 173-4
 "Swadeshi," India and, 214, 215
 Swarajists, and their policy, 19, 108, 118, 119, 125, 137 *et seq.*, 159, 160, 241

 TAGORE, MAHARSHI DAYENDRANATH (father of the poet), 196
 Tagore, Rabindranath, popularity of, 23; a visit to, 196 *et seq.*
 Tantah, author's experiences at, 72
 Tanzim, replies to Maha Sabha, 122
 Tarbush (or fez); Egyptian, 66
 Thompson, Mr. Edward, a translation of Tagore's evening hymn by, 198-9
 Tiger Hill, Darjeeling, 111, 112
 Turkey, capital transferred to Angora, 8; abandons the Caliphate, 9, 29, 121; effect of exchange of populations between Greece and, 41; contrasted with Egypt, 65
 Turkey, Sultan of, as suzerain of Egypt, 68-9
 "Turkish Homeland" theory, Kemal Pasha's, 8, 9
 Tutankhamen's tomb, its attraction for tourists, 93 *et seq.*

 UNITED PROVINCES, the, Swarajist policy in, 119; Dyarchy system in, 125
 United States of America, as parallel to Indian administrative problem, 17; average length of life in, 163
 Usury, Moslem objection to, 176

 VENKATARAMANI, K. S., 185-6
 Village life in India, 158 *et seq.*
 Village poets, Tagore's collection of songs by, 204
 Villagers, Indian, 163, 165

 WATSON, MR. A. H., meeting with, 105 (note)
 Well-sinking in Nawaragar, 218
 Whyte, Sir Frederick, Indian studies of, 244
 Widowhood, perpetual, 167
 Williams, L. F. Rushbrook, "India in 1924-25" by, 121, 169 (note)

 ZAGHLUL PASHA, deportation of, 71; author and, 87-8
 Ziwari Pasha, Government of, 76, 77, 79.



